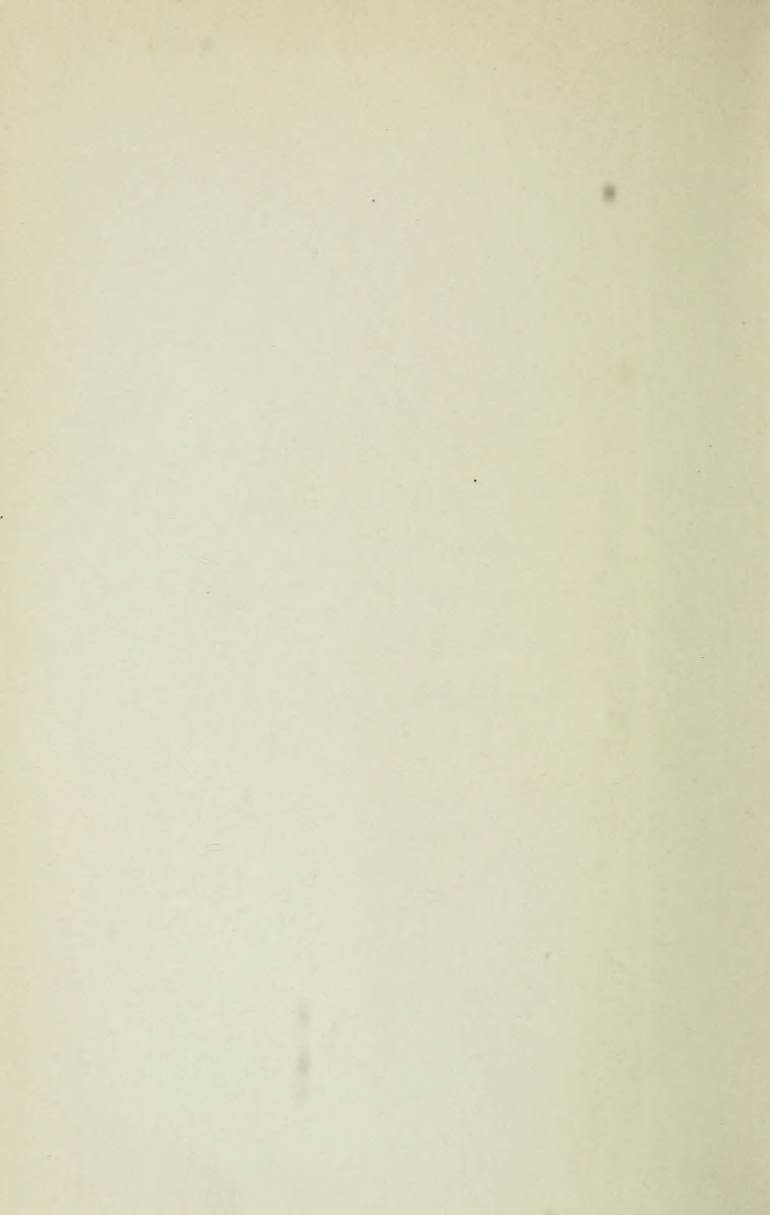





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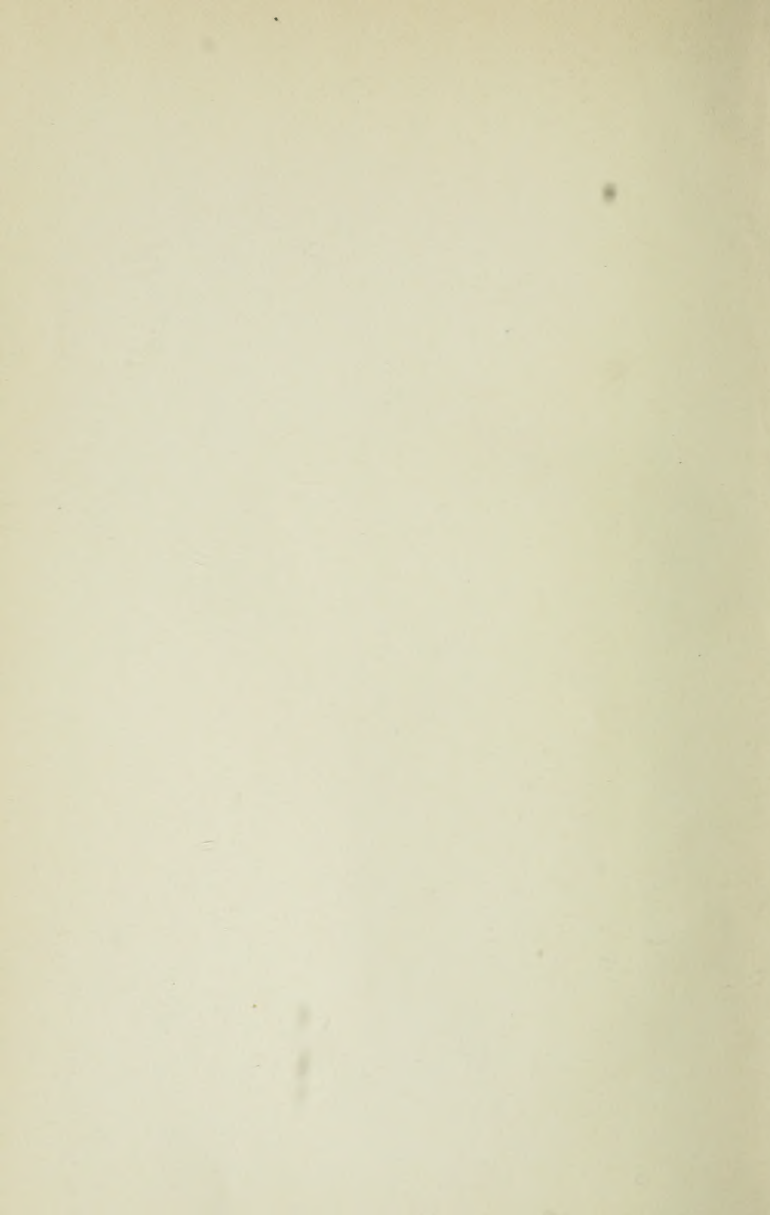


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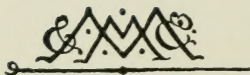


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THE CANDLE OF THE LORD

AND NINE OTHER SERMONS



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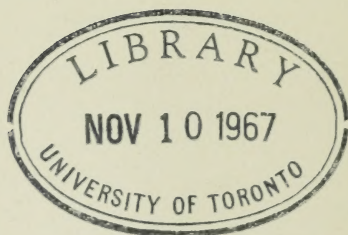
BY THE
REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS

BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS

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SERMONS.

I.

THE CANDLE OF THE LORD.

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.” — PROV. xx. 27.

THE essential connection between the life of God and the life of man is the great truth of the world ; and that is the truth which Solomon sets forth in the striking words which I have chosen for my text this morning. The picture which the words suggest is very simple. An unlighted candle is standing in the darkness and some one comes to light it. A blazing bit of paper holds the fire at first, but it is vague and fitful. It flares and wavers and at any moment may go out. But the vague, uncertain, flaring blaze touches the candle, and the candle catches fire and at once you have a steady flame. It burns straight and clear and constant. The candle gives the fire a manifestation-point for all the room which is illuminated by it. The candle is glorified by the fire and the fire is manifested by the candle. The two bear witness that they were made for one another by the way in which they fulfil each other's life. That fulfilment comes by the way in which the inferior substance renders obedience to its superior. The candle obeys the fire. The docile wax acknowledges that the subtle flame is its master and it yields to his power ; and so, like every

faithful servant of a noble master, it at once gives its master's nobility the chance to utter itself, and its own substance is clothed with a glory which is not its own. The disobedient granite, if you try to burn it, neither gives the fire a chance to show its brightness nor gathers any splendor to itself. It only glows with sullen resistance, and, as the heat increases, splits and breaks but will not yield. But the candle obeys, and so in it the scattered fire finds a point of permanent and clear expression.

Can we not see, with such a picture clear before us, what must be meant when it is said that one being is the candle of another being? There is in a community a man of large, rich character, whose influence runs everywhere. You cannot talk with any man in all the city but you get, shown in that man's own way, the thought, the feeling of that central man who teaches all the community to think, to feel. The very boys catch something of his power, and have something about them that would not be there if he were not living in the town. What better description could you give of all that, than to say that that man's life was fire and that all these men's lives were candles which he lighted, which gave to the rich, warm, live, fertile nature that was in him multiplied points of steady exhibition, so that he lighted the town through them? Or, not to look so widely, I pity you if in the circle of your home there is not some warm and living nature which is your fire. Your cold, dark candle-nature, touched by that fire, burns bright and clear. Wherever you are carried, perhaps into regions where that nature cannot go, you carry its fire and set it up in some new place. Nay, the fire itself may have

disappeared, the nature may have vanished from the earth and gone to heaven ; and yet still your candle-life, which was lighted at it, keeps that fire still in the world, as the fire of the lightning lives in the tree that it has struck, long after the quick lightning itself has finished its short, hot life and died. So the man in the counting-room is the candle of the woman who stays at home, making her soft influence felt in the rough places of trade where her feet never go ; and so a man who lives like an inspiration in the city for honesty and purity and charity may be only the candle in whose obedient life burns still the fire of another strong, true man who was his father, and who passed out of men's sight a score of years ago. Men call the father dead, but he is no more dead than the torch has gone out which lighted the beacon that is blazing on the hill.

And now, regarding all this lighting of life from life, two things are evident, the same two which appeared in the story of the candle and its flame : First, there must be a correspondency of nature between the two ; and second, there must be a cordial obedience of the less to the greater. The nature which cannot feel the other nature's warmth, even if it is held close to it ; and the nature which refuses to be held where the other nature's flame can reach it, — both of these must go unlighted, no matter how hotly the fire of the higher life may burn.

I think that we are ready now to turn to Solomon and read his words again and understand them. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," he says. God is the fire of this world, its vital principle, a warm pervading presence everywhere. What thing of outward

nature can so picture to us the mysterious, the subtle, the quick, live, productive and destructive thought, which has always lifted men's hearts and solemnized their faces when they have said the word GOD, as this strange thing, — so heavenly, so unearthly, so terrible, and yet so gracious ; so full of creativeness, and yet so quick and fierce to sweep whatever opposes it out of its path, — this marvel, this beauty and glory and mystery of fire ? Men have always felt the fitness of the figure ; and the fire has always crowded, closest of all earthly elements, about the throne on which their conception of Deity was seated. And now of this fire the spirit of man is the candle. What does that mean ? If, because man is of a nature which corresponds to the nature of God, and just so far as man is obedient to God, the life of God, which is spread throughout the universe, gathers itself into utterance ; and men, aye, and all other beings, if such beings there are, capable of watching our humanity, see what God is, in gazing at the man whom He has kindled, — then is not the figure plain ? It is a wondrous thought, but it is clear enough. Here is the universe, full of the diffused fire of divinity. Men feel it in the air, as they feel an intense heat which has not broken into a blaze. That is the meaning of a great deal of the unexplained, mysterious awfulness of life, of which they who are very much in its power are often only half aware. It is the sense of God, felt but unseen, like an atmosphere burdened with heat that does not burst out into fire. Now in the midst of this solemn, burdened world there stands up a man, pure, God-like, and perfectly obedient to God. In an instant it is as if the heated room had found some sensitive, inflammable point where it could kindle to a

blaze. The vague oppressiveness of God's felt presence becomes clear and definite. The fitfulness of the impression of divinity is steadied into permanence. The mystery changes its character, and is a mystery of light and not of darkness. The fire of the Lord has found the candle of the Lord, and burns clear and steady, guiding and cheering instead of bewildering and frightening us, just so soon as a man who is obedient to God has begun to catch and manifest His nature.

I hope that we shall find that this truth comes very close to our personal, separate lives ; but, before we come to that, let me remind you first with what a central dignity it clothes the life of man in the great world. Certain philosophies, which belong to our time, would depreciate the importance of man in the world, and rob him of his centralness. Man's instinct and man's pride rebel against them, but he is puzzled by their speciousness. Is it indeed true, as it seems, that the world is made for man, and that from man, standing in the centre, all things besides which the world contains get their true value and receive the verdict of their destiny ? That was the old story that the Bible told. The book of Genesis with its Garden of Eden, and its obedient beasts waiting until the man should tell them what they should be called, struck firmly, at the beginning of the anthem of the world's history, the great note of the centralness of man. And the Garden of Eden, in this its first idea, repeats itself in every cabin of the western forests or the southern jungles, where a new Adam and a new Eve, a solitary settler and his wife, begin as it were the human history anew. There once again the note of Genesis is struck, and man asserts his central-

ness. The forest waits to catch the color of his life. The beasts hesitate in fear or anger till he shall tame them to his service or bid them depart. The earth under his feet holds its fertility at his command, and answers the summons of his grain or flower-seeds. The very sky over his head regards him, and what he does upon the earth is echoed in the changes of the climate and the haste or slowness of the storms. This is the great impression which all the simplest life of man is ever creating, and with which the philosophies, which would make little of the separateness and centralness of the life of man, must always have to fight. And this is the impression which is taken up and strengthened and made clear, and turned from a petty pride to a lofty dignity and a solemn responsibility, when there comes such a message as this of Solomon's. He says that the true separateness and superiority and centralness of man is in that likeness of nature to God, and that capacity of spiritual obedience to Him, in virtue of which man may be the declaration and manifestation of God to all the world. So long as that truth stands, the centralness of man is sure. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."

This is the truth of which I wish to speak to you to-day, the perpetual revelation of God by human life. You must ask yourself first, what God is. You must see how at the very bottom of His existence, as you conceive of it, lie these two thoughts — purpose and righteousness; how absolutely impossible it is to give God any personality except as the fulfilment of these two qualities — the intelligence that plans in love, and the righteousness that lives in duty. Then ask yourself

how any knowledge of these qualities — of what they are, of what kind of being they will make in their perfect combination — could exist upon the earth if there were not a human nature here in which they could be uttered, from which they could shine. Only a person can truly utter a person. Only from a character can a character be echoed. You might write it all over the skies that God was just, but it would not burn there. It would be, at best, only a bit of knowledge ; never a Gospel ; never something which it would gladden the hearts of men to know. That comes only when a human life, capable of a justice like God's, made just by God, glows with His justice in the eyes of men, a candle of the Lord.

I have just intimated one thing which we need to observe. Man's utterance of God is purely an utterance of quality. It can tell me nothing of the quantities which make up His perfect life. That God is just, and what it is to be just — those things I can learn from the just lives of the just men about me ; but how just God is, to what unconceived perfection, to what unexpected developments of itself, that majestic quality of justice may extend in Him, — of that I can form no judgment, that is worth anything, from the justice that I see in fellow-man. This seems to me to widen at once the range of the truth which I am stating. If it be the quality of God which man is capable of uttering, then it must be the quality of manhood that is necessary for the utterance ; the quality of manhood, but not any specific quantity, not any assignable degree of human greatness. Whoever has in him the human quality, whoever really has the spirit of man, may be a candle of the Lord. A larger measure of that spirit may make

a brighter light; but there must be a light wherever any human being, in virtue of his humanness, by obedience becomes luminous with God. There are the men of lofty spiritual genius, the leaders of our race. How they stand out through history! How all men feel as they pass into their presence that they are passing into the light of God! They are puzzled when they try to explain it. There is nothing more instructive and suggestive than the bewilderment which men feel when they try to tell what inspiration is, — how men become inspired. The lines which they draw through the continual communication between God and man are always becoming unsteady and confused. But in general, he who comes into the presence of any powerful nature, whose power is at all of a spiritual sort, feels sure that in some way he is coming into the presence of God. But it would be melancholy if only the great men could give us this conviction. The world would be darker than it is if every human spirit, so soon as it became obedient, did not become the Lord's candle. A poor, meagre, starved, bruised life, if only it keeps the true human quality and does not become inhuman, and if it is obedient to God in its blind, dull, half-conscious way, becomes a light. Lives yet more dark than it is, become dimly aware of God through it. A mere child, in his pure humanity, and with his easy and instinctive turning of his life toward the God from whom he came, — it is one of the commonplaces of your homes how often he may burn with some suggestion of divinity, and cast illumination upon problems and mysteries whose difficulty he himself has never felt. There are great lamps and little lamps burning everywhere. The world is

bright with them. You shut your book in which you have been holding communion with one of the great souls of all time; and while you are standing in the light which he has shed about him, your child beside you says some simple, childlike thing, and a new thread of shining wisdom runs through the sweet and subtle thoughts that the great thinker gave you, as the light of a little taper sends its special needle of brightness through the pervasive splendor of a sunlit world. It is not strange. The fire is the same, whatever be the human lamp that gives it its expression. There is no life so humble that, if it be true and genuinely human and obedient to God, it may not hope to shed some of His light. There is no life so meagre that the greatest and wisest of us can afford to despise it. We cannot know at all at what sudden moment it may flash forth with the life of God.

And in this truth of ours we have certainly the key to another mystery which sometimes puzzles us. What shall we make of some man rich in attainments and in generous desires, well educated, well behaved, who has trained himself to be a light and help to other men, and who, now that his training is complete, stands in the midst of his fellow-men completely dark and helpless? There are plenty of such men. We have all known them who have seen how men grow up. Their brethren stand around them expecting light from them, but no light comes. They themselves are full of amazement at themselves. They built themselves for influence, but no one feels them. They kindled themselves to give light, but no one shines a grateful answer back to them. Perhaps they blame their fellow-men, who

are too dull to see their radiance. Perhaps they only wonder what is the matter, and wait, with a hope that never quite dies out into despair, for the long-delayed recognition and gratitude. At last they die, and the men who stand about their graves feel that the saddest thing about their death is that the world is not perceptibly the darker for their dying. What does it mean? If we let the truth of Solomon's figure play upon it, is not the meaning of the familiar failure simply this: These men are unlighted candles; they are the spirit of man, elaborated, cultivated, finished to its very finest, but lacking the last touch of God. As dark as a row of silver lamps, all chased and wrought with wondrous skill, all filled with rarest oil, but all untouched with fire, — so dark in this world is a long row of cultivated men, set up along the corridors of some age of history, around the halls of some wise university, or in the pulpits of some stately church, to whom there has come no fire of devotion, who stand in awe and reverence before no wisdom greater than their own, who are proud and selfish, who do not know what it is to obey. There is the explanation of your wonder when you cling close to some man whom the world calls bright, and find that you get no brightness from him. There is the explanation of yourself, O puzzled man, who never can make out why the world does not turn to you for help. The poor blind world cannot tell its need, nor analyze its instinct, nor say why it seeks one man and leaves another; but through its blind eyes it knows when the fire of God has fallen on a human life. This is the meaning of the strange helpfulness which comes into a man when he truly is converted. It is not new truth

that he knows, not new wonders that he can do, but it is that the unlighted nature, in the utter obedience and self-surrender of that great hour, has been lifted up and lighted at the life of God, and now burns with Him.

But it is not the worst thing in life for a man to be powerless or uninfluential. There are men enough for whom we would thank God if they did no harm, even if they did no good. I will not stop now to question whether there be such a thing possible as a life totally without influence of any kind, whether perhaps the men of whom I have been speaking do not also belong to the class of whom I want next to speak. However that may be, I am sure you will recognize the fact that there is a multitude of men whose lamps are certainly not dark, and yet who certainly are not the candles of the Lord. A nature furnished richly to the very brim, a man of knowledge, of wit, of skill, of thought, with the very graces of the body perfect, and yet profane, impure, worldly, and scattering scepticism of all good and truth about him wherever he may go. His is no unlighted candle. He burns so bright and lurid that often the purer lights grow dim in the glare. But if it be possible for the human candle, when it is all made, when the subtle components of a human nature are all mingled most carefully, — if it be possible that then, instead of being lifted up to heaven and kindled at the pure being of Him who is eternally and absolutely good, it should be plunged down into hell and lighted at the yellow flames that burn out of the dreadful brimstone of the pit, then we can understand the sight of a man who is rich in every brilliant human quality, cursing the world with the continual exhibition of the devilish instead of

the godlike in his life. When the power of pure love appears as a capacity of brutal lust ; when the holy ingenuity with which man may search the character of a fellow-man, that he may help him to be his best, is turned into the unholy skill with which the bad man studies his victim, that he may know how to make his damnation most complete ; when the almost divine magnetism, which is given to a man in order that he may instil his faith and hope into some soul that trusts him, is used to breathe doubt and despair through all the substance of a friend's reliant soul ; when wit, which ought to make truth beautiful, is deliberately prostituted to the service of a lie ; when earnestness is degraded to be the slave of blasphemy, and the slave's reputation is made the cloak for the master's shame, — in all these cases, and how frequent they are no man among us fails to know, you have simply the spirit of man kindled from below, not from above, the candle of the Lord burning with the fire of the devil. Still it will burn ; still the native inflammableness of humanity will show itself. There will be light ; there will be power ; and men who want nothing but light and power will come to it. It is wonderful how mere power, or mere brightness, apart altogether from the work that the power is doing and the story that the brightness has to tell, will win the confidence and admiration of men from whom we might have expected better things. A bright book or a bright play will draw the crowd, although its meaning be detestable. A clever man will make a host of boys and men stand like charmed birds while he draws their principles quietly out of them and leaves them moral idiots. A whole great majority of a com-

munity will rush like foolish sheep to the polls and vote for a man who they know is false and brutal, because they have learned to say that he is strong. All this is true enough ; and yet while men do these wild and foolish things, they know the difference between the illumination of a human life that is kindled from above and that which is kindled from below. They know the pure flames of one and the lurid glare of the other ; and however they may praise and follow wit and power, as if to be witty or powerful were an end sufficient in itself, they will always keep their sacredest respect and confidence for that power or wit which is inspired by God, and works for righteousness.

There is still another way, more subtle and sometimes more dangerous than these, in which the spirit of man may fail of its completest function as the candle of the Lord. The lamp may be lighted, and the fire at which it is lighted may be indeed the fire of God, and yet it may not be God alone who shines forth upon the world. I can picture to myself a candle which should in some way mingle a peculiarity of its own substance with the light it shed, giving to that light a hue which did not belong essentially to the fire at which it was lighted. Men who saw it would see not only the brightness of the fire. They would see also the tone and color of the lamp. And so it is, I think, with the way in which some good men manifest God. They have really kindled their lives at Him. It is His fire that burns in them. They are obedient, and so He can make them His points of exhibition ; but they cannot get rid of themselves. They are mixed with the God they show. They show themselves as well as Him. It is as when

a mirror mingles its own shape with the reflections of the things that are reflected from it, and gives them a curious convexity because it is itself convex. This is the secret of all pious bigotry, of all holy prejudice. It is the candle, putting its own color into the flame which it has borrowed from the fire of God. The violent man makes God seem violent. The feeble man makes God seem feeble. The speculative man makes God look like a beautiful dream. The legal man makes God look like a hard and steel-like law. Here is where all the harsh and narrow part of sectarianism comes from. The narrow Presbyterian or Methodist, or Episcopalian or Quaker, full of devoutness, really afire with God,—what is he but a candle which is always giving the flame its color, and which, by a disposition which many men have to value the little parts of their life more than the greater, makes less of the essential brightness of the flame than of the special color which it lends to it? It seems, perhaps, as if, in saying this, I threw some slight or doubt upon that individual and separate element in every man's religion, on which, upon the contrary, I place the very highest value. Every man who is a Christian must live a Christian life that is peculiarly his own. Every candle of the Lord must utter its peculiar light; only the true individuality of faith is marked by these characteristics which rescue it from bigotry: first, that it does not add something to the universal light, but only brings out most strongly some aspect of it which is specially its own; second, that it always cares more about the essential light than about the peculiar way in which it utters it; and third, that it easily blends with other special utterances of the

universal light, in cordial sympathy and recognition of the value which it finds in them. Let these characteristics be in every man's religion, and then the individuality of faith is an inestimable gain. Then the different candles of the Lord burn in long rows down His great palace-halls of the world ; and all together, each complementing all the rest, they light the whole vast space with Him.

I have tried to depict some of the difficulties which beset the full exhibition in the world of this great truth of Solomon, that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Man is selfish and disobedient, and will not let his life burn at all. Man is wilful and passionate, and kindles his life with ungodly fire. Man is narrow and bigoted, and makes the light of God shine with his own special color. But all these are accidents. All these are distortions of the true idea of man. How can we know that ? Here is the perfect man, Christ Jesus ! What a man He is ! How nobly, beautifully, perfectly human ! What hands, what feet, what an eye, what a heart ! How genuinely, unmistakably a man ! I bring the men of my experience or of my imagination into His presence, and behold, just when the worst or best of them falls short of Him, my human consciousness assures me that they fall short also of the best idea of what it is to be a man. Here is the spirit of man in its perfection. And what then ? Is it not also the candle of the Lord ? "I am come a light into the world," said Jesus. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." So wrote the man of all men who knew Him best. And in Him where are the difficulties that

we saw? where for one moment is the dimness of selfishness? O, it seems to me a wonderful thing that the supremely rich human nature of Jesus never for an instant turned with self-indulgence in on its own richness, or was beguiled by that besetting danger of all opulent souls, the wish, in the deepest sense, just to enjoy himself. How fascinating that desire is. How it keeps many and many of the most abundant natures in the world from usefulness. Just to handle over and over their hidden treasures, and with a spiritual miserliness to think their thought for the pure joy of thinking, and turn emotion into the soft atmosphere of a life of gardened selfishness. Not one instant of that in Jesus. All the vast richness of His human nature only meant for Him more power to utter God to man.

And yet how pure His rich life was. How it abhorred to burn with any fire that was not divine. Such abundant life, and yet such utter incapacity of any living but the holiest; such power of burning, and yet such utter incapacity of being kindled by any torch but God's; such fulness with such purity was never seen besides upon the earth; and yet we know as we behold it that it is no monster, but only the type of what all men must be, although all men but Him as yet have failed to be it.

And yet again there was intense personality in Him without a moment's bigotry. A special life, a life that stands distinct and self-defined among all the lives of men, and yet a life making the universal God all the more universally manifest by its distinctness, appealing to all lives just in proportion to the intensity of the individuality that filled His own. O, I think I need only bid you look at Him, and you must see what it is to

which our feeble lights are struggling. There is the true spiritual man who is the candle of the Lord, the light that lighteth every man.

It is distinctly a new idea of life, new to the standards of all our ordinary living, which this truth reveals. All our ordinary appeals to men to be up and doing, and make themselves shining lights, fade away and become insignificant before this higher message which comes in the words of Solomon and in the life of Jesus. What does the higher message say? "You are a part of God! You have no place or meaning in this world but in relationship to Him. The full relationship can only be realized by obedience. Be obedient to Him, and you shall shine by His light, not your own. Then you cannot be dark, for He shall kindle you. Then you shall be as incapable of burning with false passion as you shall be quick to answer with the true. Then the devil may hold his torch to you, as he held it to the heart of Jesus in the desert, and your heart shall be as unflammable as His. But as soon as God touches you, you shall burn with a light so truly your own that you shall reverence your own mysterious life, and yet so truly His that pride shall be impossible." What a philosophy of human life is that. "O, to be nothing, nothing!" cries the mystic singer in his revival hymn, desiring to lose himself in God. "Nay not that; O to be something, something," remonstrates the unmystical man, longing for work, ardent for personal life and character. Where is the meeting of the two? How shall self-surrender meet that high self-value without which no man can justify his living and honor himself in his humanity? Where can they meet but in this truth?

Man must be something that he may be nothing. The something which he must be must consist in simple fitness to utter the divine life which is the only original power in the universe. And then man must be nothing that he may be something. He must submit himself in obedience to God, that so God may use him, in some way in which his special nature only could be used, to illuminate and help the world. Tell me, do not the two cries meet in that one aspiration of the Christian man to find his life by losing it in God, to be himself by being not his own but Christ's ?

In certain lands, for certain holy ceremonies, they prepare the candles with most anxious care. The very bees which distil the wax are sacred. They range in gardens planted with sweet flowers for their use alone. The wax is gathered by consecrated hands ; and then the shaping of the candles is a holy task, performed in holy places, to the sound of hymns, and in the atmosphere of prayers. All this is done because the candles are to burn in the most lofty ceremonies on most sacred days. With what care must the man be made whose spirit is to be the candle of the Lord ! It is his spirit which God is to kindle with Himself. Therefore the spirit must be the precious part of him. The body must be valued only for the protection and the education which the soul may gain by it. And the power by which his spirit shall become a candle is obedience. Therefore obedience must be the struggle and desire of his life ; obedience, not hard and forced, but ready, loving, and spontaneous ; the obedience of the child to the father, of the candle to the flame ; the doing of duty not merely that the duty may be done, but that the soul in

doing it may become capable of receiving and uttering God; the bearing of pain not merely because the pain must be borne, but that the bearing of it may make the soul able to burn with the divine fire which found it in the furnace; the repentance of sin and acceptance of forgiveness, not merely that the soul may be saved from the fire of hell, but that it may be touched with the fire of heaven, and shine with the love of God, as the stars, forever.

Above all the pictures of life, — of what it means, of what may be made out of it, — there stands out this picture of a human spirit burning with the light of the God whom it obeys, and showing Him to other men. O, my young friends, the old men will tell you that the lower pictures of life and its purposes turn out to be cheats and mistakes. But this picture can never cheat the soul that tries to realize it. The man whose life is a struggle after such obedience, when at last his earthly task is over, may look forward from the borders of this life into the other, and humbly say, as his history of the life that is ended, and his prayer for the life that is to come, the words that Jesus said — “I have glorified Thee on the earth; now, O Father, glorify Me with Thyself forever.”

[When this sermon was preached in Westminster Abbey, on the evening of Sunday, the Fourth of July, 1880, the following sentences were added :—]

MY FRIENDS,—May I ask you to linger while I say to you a few words more, which shall not be unsuited to what I have been saying, and which shall, for just a moment, recall to you the sacredness which this day — the Fourth of July, the anniversary of American Inde-

pendence — has in the hearts of us Americans. If I dare — generously permitted as I am to stand this evening in the venerable Abbey, so full of our history as well as yours — to claim that our festival shall have some sacredness for you as well as us, my claim rests on the simple truth that to all true men the birthday of a nation must always be a sacred thing. For in our modern thought the nation is the making-place of men. Not by the traditions of its history, nor by the splendor of its corporate achievements, nor by the abstract excellencies of its constitution, but by its fitness to make men, to beget and educate human character, to contribute to the complete humanity, the “perfect man” that is to be, — by this alone each nation must be judged to-day. The nations are the golden candlesticks which hold aloft the candles of the Lord. No candlestick can be so rich or venerable that men shall honor it if it holds no candle. “Show us your man,” land cries to land.

In such days any nation, out of the midst of which God has led another nation as He led ours out of the midst of yours, must surely watch with anxiety and prayer the peculiar development of our common humanity of which that new nation is made the home, the special burning of the human candle in that new candlestick; and if she sees a hope and promise that God means to build in that new land some strong and free and characteristic manhood which shall help the world to its completeness, the mother-land will surely lose the thought and memory of whatever anguish accompanied the birth, for gratitude over the gain which humanity has made, “for joy that a man is born into the world.”

It is not for me to glorify to-night the country which I love with all my heart and soul. I may not ask your praise for anything admirable which the United States has been or done. But on my country's birthday I may do something far more solemn and more worthy of the hour. I may ask you for your prayer in her behalf. That on the manifold and wondrous chance which God is giving her, — on her freedom (for she is free, since the old stain of slavery was washed out in blood); on her unconstrained religious life; on her passion for education, and her eager search for truth; on her jealous care for the poor man's rights and opportunities; on her countless quiet homes where the future generations of her men are growing; on her manufactures and her commerce; on her wide gates open to the east and to the west; on her strange meetings of the races out of which a new race is slowly being born; on her vast enterprise and her illimitable hopefulness, — on all these materials and machineries of manhood, on all that the life of my country must mean for humanity, I may ask you to pray that the blessing of God the Father of man, and Christ the Son of man, may rest forever.

Because you are Englishmen and I am an American; also because here, under this high and hospitable roof of God, we are all more than Englishmen and more than Americans; because we are all men, children of God, waiting for the full coming of our Father's kingdom, I ask you for that prayer.

II.

THE JOY OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

“And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets.” — 2 CHRON. xxix. 27.

It had been a day of joy and triumph in Jerusalem. Hezekiah, the king, reviving the faith and worship of Jehovah, from which his fathers had departed, had opened the doors of the temple and cleared out all the rubbish of the long neglect, and gathered the priests and lighted the lamps and summoned the people, and to-day there had been a vast sacrifice to the Lord, in which the people had once more declared themselves His servants, and given up again their personal and national life to Him. The burnt offering declared their penitence and consecration. It was the nation's solemn sacrifice of itself to God. The verse which I have quoted tells us one thing about this sacrifice. It records the joy with which it was made — “When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began with the trumpets.” Not in a gloomy silence, as if the people were doing a hard duty which they would not do if they could help it, did the smoke of their offering ascend to God; but with a burst of jubilant music and with a song of triumphant joy which rang down through the crowded courts, the host of the Jews claimed for themselves anew their place in the obedi-

ence of God. The act of sacrifice was done amid a chorus of delight.

The old sacrifices are past and done forever. There are no more smoking altars or bleeding beasts ; but that which they represented still remains, and will remain so long as man and God are child and Father to each other. The giving up of the life of man away from himself to serve his true and rightful Master, the surrender of his life to another, self-sacrifice, which is what these burnt offerings picturesquely represented, is universally and perpetually necessary. As we study the old ceremony, that which it represented stands before us ; and one question which comes up, the question which I want to make the subject of my sermon for this morning, is that which is suggested by the verse in the old book of Chronicles, in which the rejoicing of the people over their burnt offering is written. It is not beasts, but lives that we offer. Can the life, too, be offered now as the beast was offered of old, with song and trumpet ? Can self-sacrifice be a thing of triumph and exhilaration ? Can it be the conscious glorification of a life to give that life away in self-denial ? The joy and glory of self-sacrifice shall be our subject.

You know how strangely such a subject must sound even to many very good and conscientious people. Multitudes of people there are all about us, who thoroughly accept it as the great law and necessity of human life that there must be self-sacrifice. It is not only that they have been taught it from their earliest youth ; not merely that they find it written in what are recognized as the highest codes of human living ; but

their own experience and their own hearts have taught it to them. They see that the world would be a dreadful and intolerable place if every creature in it lived only for his own mere immediate indulgence. They own that the higher nature and the higher purpose everywhere have a right to the submission of the lower, and they freely accept the conviction that the lower must submit. The different forms of self-sacrifice stand around them with their demands. There is the need that a man should sacrifice himself to himself, his lower self to his higher self, his passions to his principles. There is the need of sacrificing one's self for fellow-men. There is the highest need of all, the need of giving up our will to God's. All of these needs a man will own and honor. He will try to meet them all his life. But when you come to talk of joy in meeting them, that is another matter. Self-sacrifice seems to him something apart from the whole notion of enjoyment. It is a disagreeable necessity of life. It seems to be tied on to life by some strange fate, as if it were the result of some terrible mistake. Perhaps the man is able to recognize that the necessity is made use of for some purposes of education, and so is not wholly unthankful that the necessity exists ; but to rejoice over it, to give up our own will, to sacrifice our pleasure and take up our task with a song, — that is something which most men, even those who work on most scrupulously at their duty cannot comprehend. "I know it is my duty because I hate it so," somebody said to me once about some task. That is the look of duty to multitudes of men. The highest dream of the poet is of a state of things in which we shall know that something is our duty

because we love it so ; the condition in which " love is an unerring light and joy its own security." That condition, in whatever region of the universe the soul attained to it, would be heaven ; and yet it would be only the realization and completion of that which was set forth in the old ceremony of the book of Chronicles, in which the sacrifice was greeted with the blast of the trumpets and the songs of the people.

Heaven seems impossible, and yet there are promises and prophecies of heaven on every side of us. There are always glimpses of man's highest life which show us, like the first streaks of light before the dawn, what it would be if all the sky were filled with glory ; and so there are always exalted lives, and exalted moments in the lives, I hope, of all of us, in which we do catch sight of the joy and glory of self-sacrifice. Not many years ago, when the young men went to the war, was it not true that the fact of sacrifice intensified the joy ? It was a joy to save their country, to feel sure, as it is not often given to men vividly to feel, that they were doing a real and valuable part of her salvation. But tell me, what made the difference between their going and the patient plodding of the clerk up to the State House, or the quiet journey of the congressman to Washington to-day ? They too, if they are honest and faithful, are saving the country just as truly as the soldiers were. Why does the one trudge the streets unnoticed, while before the others trumpets blew, and around them the crowd shouted, and in their bosoms their hearts leaped for joy ? It is easy to say that it was the poetry, the romance, the enthusiasm. Those are mere words. The essence of it was that in

their going the self-sacrifice was vivid and distinct. They were leaving home and friends and safety and comfort. Ah, you are very young, too young to remember the spirit of those days, if you do not know that that self-sacrifice was not a drawback on the joy of the truest men's enlistment; it was a part and parcel of that joy. No safe and easy task could ever have filled the heart with such a sober and deep delight.

Or think about a man who does something which you choose to call a piece of superfluous mercantile honesty, but something which, under the higher compulsions that press upon his loftier nature, he thinks that it is absolutely necessary for him to do. He has failed in business and he has settled with his creditors; and they are satisfied with what they have got from him, and give him a full discharge from all his obligations; and by and by the man succeeds again and then, as he begins to grow rich once more, he takes upon himself the payment, principal and interest, of his old debts. He lives like a poor man still. He will not let his life grow sumptuous till first it has grown honest. Do you say, "What a slavery! What a tyrant his conscience is to him!" But to him it is the most enthusiastic freedom. He goes his way with his heart making music to him all the day long, and following his conscience as no most devoted soldier ever followed his half-worshipped captain. Every time that another comfort is laid upon the altar of his honesty, the song of the Lord begins with the trumpets. There may be in it some mixture of unworthy pride; but, if there is, it is an alloy and not a refinement, a decrease and not an increase of the joy. It makes it nervous, restless,

and impatient. But leave that out. Let the man simply want to be honest, and then the self-sacrifice, by which alone his honesty can be done, is a true element in his delight. He is happier in his slow payment of his self-recognized debt, in which each dollar that he pays means some distinct piece of self-sacrifice, than he could be if boundless wealth had suddenly tumbled upon him from the skies, of which he, without an effort, had easily handed over a little fragment to his creditors.

The words of our text then, however strangely they sound at first, are literally true as the history of many a man's life. Many and many a man has gone on year after year, with little or no zest in his existence, perfectly self-indulgent, seeing no need, hearing no call to be anything else than self-indulgent, until at last there came some change which seemed at first to be a terrible misfortune, something which threw the whole heavy weight of other people's lives upon the shoulders of this one life, so that it had to forget itself and live completely for these others. And then how can you tell the story of the difference which came into that burdened life? What words can tell it more perfectly than these, "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets"? From the moment that it began to live for other people, this nature, which had had no song in it before, became jubilant with music. The young self-indulgent man becomes the head of a family that taxes his thought by day and night. The merely selfish thinker, who has worked out his thoughts for the mere luxury of thinking, suddenly finds the world calling for him to plunge

into the detail of some work of charity or education. Anything comes which makes a man take up his life as it were in his two hands and give it away to be thenceforth lived not for himself but for others, who, he has to acknowledge, have a better right to it, the right of an imperious need. At first there is reluctance, hesitation. The teeth are set. The hands are clenched. The eyes look back as if they were leaving all the happiness of life behind them. But ask the man a few years later; nay, look at him after he has thoroughly lost himself in his new work, and when you see what life has come to be to him, what spring there is in every movement, what sparkle in every thought, what eagerness, what interest, what hope; is it not clear that just that which has come to him, just the abandonment of selfishness and some strong impulsive giving of himself away to other people, was what was needed to fill all the accumulations of his life with joy, and to clothe all the qualities of his character with glory?

As one looks round upon the community to-day, how clear the problem of hundreds of unhappy lives appears. Do we not all know men for whom it is just as clear as daylight that that is what they need, the sacrifice of themselves for other people? Rich men who with all their wealth are weary and wretched; learned men whose learning only makes them querulous and jealous; believing men whose faith is always souring into bigotry and envy, — every man knows what these men need; just something which shall make them let themselves go out into the open ocean of a complete self-sacrifice. They are rubbing and fretting and chafing themselves against the wooden wharves of their own

interests to which they are tied. Sometime or other a great, slow, quiet tide, or a great, strong, furious storm, must come and break every rope that binds them, and carry them clear out to sea; and then they will for the first time know the true, manly joy for which a man was made, as a ship for the first time knows the full joy for which a ship was made, when she trusts herself to the open sea and, with the wharf left far behind, feels the winds over her and the waters under her, and recognizes her true life. Only, the trust to the great ocean must be complete. No trial trip will do. No ship can tempt the sea and learn its glory, so long as she goes moored by any rope, however long, by which she means to be drawn back again if the sea grows too rough. The soul that trifles and toys with self-sacrifice never can get its true joy and power. Only the soul that with an overwhelming impulse and a perfect trust gives itself up forever to the life of other men, finds the delight and peace which such complete self-surrender has to give.

One would not seem to be so foolish as to say that self-sacrifice does not bring pain. Indeed it does. The life of Christ must be our teacher there. He carried the song and the trumpet always in his heart. That life, marking its way with drops of blood, on which the pity of the world has dwelt more tenderly than over any other life it knows, has yet always seemed to the world's best standards to be a true triumphal march, radiant with splendor all along the way, and closing in a true victory at last. Indeed I think that one of the brightest insights which we ever get into the human heart and its essential breadth and justice, and its power, when it

is working at its best, to hold what seem contradictory ideas in their true spiritual harmony, is given to us when we see how men have been able to see together both sides of the life of Jesus, to pity His sorrow and to glory in His happiness, and yet to blend both of these two thoughts of Him into one single idea of one single self-consistent Christ. It is a sort of witness of how truly men, in that highest mood into which they are drawn when they try to study Christ, easily see the real truth with regard to human life, which is that in it joy and pain, so far from being inconsistent with and contradictory to one another, are, in some true sense, each others' complements, and neither alone, but both together, make the true sum of human life. There is a conceivable world where pure, unclouded joy can come, just as there are countries where the mountains are very lofty and all nature is on so grand a scale that it can bear a pure, unclouded sky, and in its unveiled splendor perfectly satisfy the eye. But there are other lands whose inferior grandeur needs for its perfect beauty the effects of mist and cloud that give its lower mountains the mystery and poetry which they could not have in themselves. So one may compare the Swiss and the Scotch landscapes. And something of the same sort is true about this world and marks its inferiority, proves that it is not yet the perfect state of being. It needs the pain of life to emphasize its joy. Its joy is not high or perfect enough to do without the emphasis of pain. And so, to come back to the point whence we digressed, it is not strange that that which is the necessary condition of joy in this human life — namely, self-sacrifice — should be also inevitably associated with suffering and pain.

There is another reason why it would seem to be absolutely necessary that man should have the power of finding pleasure in his self-sacrifices, in the actual fulfilment of his compelled tasks, the actual doing of the necessary duties of his life, and that is found in the fact that joy or delight in what we are doing is not a mere luxury ; it is a means, a help for the more perfect doing of our work. Indeed it may be truly said that no man does any work perfectly who does not enjoy his work. Joy in one's work is the consummate tool without which the work may be done indeed, but without which the work will always be done slowly, clumsily, and without its finest perfectness. Men who do their work without enjoying it are like men carving statues with hatchets. The statue gets carved perhaps, and is a monument forever of the dogged perseverance of the artist ; but there is a perpetual waste of toil, and there is no fine result in the end. A man who does his work with thorough enjoyment of it is like an artist who holds an exquisite tool which is almost as obedient to him as his own hand, and seems to understand what he is doing, and almost works intelligently with him. If the only loss of a man who hates his work were the mere loss of the luxury of enjoying it, that would be bad ; but if, in the loss of the enjoyment of his work, he loses a large part of the power for the most effective doing of his work, then it is a matter far more serious. I passed, the other day, a pawn-broker's shop in an obscure street here in our city. Its windows showed the usual shabby and wretched refuse which belongs to such places, that sort of battered and broken driftwood which the tide of human energy and hope and success

has left stranded on the beach when it has ebbed out to sea. But one window was a great deal sadder than the other. In the first window there were tawdry and faded trinkets, old jewelry and bits of cheap personal finery, which poverty had confiscated from their desperate or careless owners; but in the other window there were piles of workmen's tools — hammers and saws and planes and files and axes — the things with which men do their work and earn their living. That was the sadder window of the two. To lose a trinket is mortification and disappointment, but to lose a tool may be ruin. And so if joy in work were a mere polish and decoration of life, it would be sad that man should not have it; but if it is the means by which alone the work of life may be effectively and nobly done, then its loss may be the very loss of life itself.

I think we want to urge most strenuously upon young men the need, the absolute necessity, that in the appointed and demanded work of their life they should look for and should find the joy of their life. To do your work because you must; to do your work as a slavery; and then, having got it done as speedily and easily as possible, to look somewhere else for enjoyment, — that makes a very dreary life. No man who works so does the best work. No man who works so lingers lovingly over his work and asks himself if there is not something he can do to make it more perfect. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work," said Jesus. No doubt it was the intrinsic nobleness of His special work that made it peculiarly abundant in the enjoyment which it furnished Him; and no doubt any young man who has the

choice of several occupations ought to choose that which is intrinsically highest, that which is occupied with the noblest things. This indeed is what makes some professions more liberal than others, — the greater power which they have to satisfy and cultivate the nature of the men who live in them; but our counsel must not be confined to them. To any man engaged in any honest, useful work, we want to say: Try just as far as possible to find the pleasure of your life in the work to which it has been settled that your life must be given. Study its principles. Let your interest dwell on its details. Make it delightful by the affections which cluster round it, by the help which you are able through it to give to other people, by the education which your own faculties are getting out of it. In all these ways make your business the centre and fountain of your joy, and then life will be healthy and strong. Then you will not be running everywhere to find some outside pleasure which shall make up to you for your self-sacrificing toil; but the scenes of your self-sacrificing toil itself, your store or your office or your work-bench, shall be bright with associations of delight, and vocal with your thankfulness to the God who has given you, in them, the most radiant revelations of Himself. This is the only true transfiguration and success of labor and of life.

And now, what is to be done about all this? Men say, "O, yes, it is easy to talk about finding your joy in your self-sacrifice and work; but I have tried it, and it cannot be done. Self-sacrifice is dreadful and unnatural. We know that we cannot escape it; but there is no joy in it. The only thing to do is to get through

with it as doggedly and speedily as possible, and then go off and in some self-indulgence find the real pleasure of your life." But surely that is shallow, superficial talk. To talk so is to take for granted that self-sacrifice is one invariable thing, and not to see that it is infinitely various according to the difference of the men who make the sacrifice, and the difference of their relations to the thing for which the sacrifice is made. Understand this and then the difficulty disappears. Is the sacrifice which the most scrupulous and faithful servant makes for a child the same thing as the sacrifice which the loving mother makes for him? Is the self-sacrifice of the hired mercenary the same thing as the sacrifice of the enthusiastic patriot? There is the key to the whole truth. If you can change a man's relation to the thing or the person for whom he makes his sacrifice, you may change the whole character of the sacrifice itself; and you may open in it fountains of delight which would have seemed before to be impossible. Nothing less deep than that will answer. You cannot go to men to whom self-sacrifice is misery or drudgery, and exhort them to be happy, and tell them and bid them believe that self-sacrifice is joy. That is treating them like children. That is merely beating a drum before them at their work, and asking them to make believe that work is play. Nor can you trust to mere animal spirits, and that happy temperament which will let some people find joy in life in spite of any sacrifices that they are called to make. You must have something a great deal realler, deeper, and more universal than either of these; and that can be nothing short of such a relation of a man to the object of his sacrifice, such an honor for it,

such a sense of its dignity, such a sight of its possibilities, as will make it a delight to give one's self up to it, and will make every pain that is involved in such surrender a welcome emphasis upon his value and honor for it, and so an increase of his joy. Earlier in this sermon I spoke of the three great classes into which all the sacrifices which men are called upon to make may really be divided. There are the sacrifices which a man makes of himself to himself, of his lower nature and needs to his higher nature and needs ; there are the sacrifices which he makes for his fellow-men ; and there are the sacrifices which he makes for God. In these three services the world of conscientious men lives and works. And very often these services are bondages. Very often the world groans bitterly under these burdens which it will not cast away, and yet which press very heavily upon its shoulders. Can anything relieve all that ? Suppose that some new power, some new revelation or new fact, should come into the world, which should change a man's relation to his own self, and to his fellow-men, and to God. Then everything would certainly be altered. Let some new light shine forth, within whose radiance man should see his own spiritual self in all its possibilities ; and see his brethren with their souls, and all that their souls might become, burning and glowing through their coarse, dull bodies ; and see God as the dear Father and glorious centre of the world ; — let all this come, and then the impossible may surely become possible, and the self-sacrifice for things so glorious, while it does not lose its pain, may find within its pain a joy of which its pain shall be mysteriously a part. And, O my friends, the truth of these

days, the truth of this week, is that such a light has shone and is forever shining on the earth. "The time draws near the birth of Christ." This coming week is rich with Christmas glory. The thing that makes it glorious, the only thing that can give dignity to all this annual outbreak of thankfulness and joy, is that the Christmas days are full of the truth of Christ's redemption of the world. Christ's redemption of the world means, for each man who truly believes in it, just these three things: the revelation to the man of his own value, and of the value of his fellow-man, and of the dearness and greatness of God. The man who has despised himself and thought his life not worth the living, learns that this human nature of his is capable of being inhabited by divinity, and sees in the cross of the Son of God what God thinks is the preciousness of his human soul. Must not that man then stand in awe before himself, and rejoice if, by the sacrifice of his appetites, he can help this regal soul to its completeness? The man who has despised his fellow-men and asked himself, "Why should I give up my pleasure for their pleasure, or even for their good?" sees in the redemption how Christ values these lives, and is not so much shamed out of his contempt for them as drawn freely forward into the precious privilege of honoring them and working for them. The man whose God has been far off and cold sees God in Christ, and loves Him with a love which makes life seem worth the living, simply that it may be devoted to work for Him. This is the power of Christ's redemption. It transfigures to a man his own soul and his brethren and God; and, seeing them in the new light of Christ, the man lifts up his

head, and his old tasks are altered. To work for such masters becomes the glory of his life. Not how he may do as little work as possible, and then escape to find his pleasure in some region of self-indulgence; but how he may do as much work as possible, because in work for such masters is the seat and fountain of his joy, becomes the problem of his life. To be shut out from any chance of signifying by self-sacrifice in their behalf his value and honor for these masters, would make his life seem very worthless. When a new chance to put his passions down that he may win character, or to give up some pleasure of his own out of the wish to honor his brother man and help him, or to sacrifice his own will to the will of God, — when such a chance is seen coming towards him in the distance, it is not, as it used to be, as if the culprit saw the executioner approaching him with the sword all drawn to take his life. Rather it is as if the born king, who had just discovered his royal lineage, saw the priest coming towards him with the crown which was to be put upon his head and make him thoroughly and manifestly king. He claims his self-sacrifice. It is the badge and means of his enthronement. And when he takes it; when he enters, for his own soul's good, or for the help of his fellow-men, or for the glory of his God, upon some path which men call very dark, or some work which men call very hard; it is with a leap of heart as if now at last the king had found his own. When his burnt offering begins, his song of the Lord begins also with the trumpets.

It is a wondrous change. The man who really lives in the world of Christ's redemption, claims his self-sacrifices. He goes up to his martyrdom with a song.

To live in this world, and do nothing for one's own spiritual self or for fellow-man or for God, is a terrible thing. I have a right to give the less as a burnt offering to the greater. There is no happy life except in such consecration. No one shall shut me out of that privilege of my redeemed humanity.

I wish that I could speak to the spirit of the most selfish creature here to-day. I wish I could show him what a vast region of pleasure and delight lies close at his side, on which he has never entered, of which he has never dreamed. The door that shuts him out of that great region of joy is his own contempt. If he will let Christ fill the world for him with the light of His redemption, contempt must fall to the ground, and the closed door must fly open, and then, "with the song of the Lord and with the trumpets," the selfish man must go out from his selfishness into the untasted and unguessed joy of self-sacrifice. He must "enter into the joy of his Lord," the joy of that Christ whose meat was to do His Father's will, who gave His life for His brethren, and whose throne was a cross.

III.

THE YOUNG AND OLD CHRISTIAN.

“The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.”—DEUT. xxxiii. 16.

MOSES had been young and now was old. These words are taken from his benediction, which he pronounced upon the children of Israel as he stood with them on the borders of the promised land. There is something very touching in the reminiscence. The long journey through the desert is over. He has done God's work nobly and successfully. Well may he be proud of this people that he has led up to the threshold of their inheritance. But now his mind is running backward. This crowning of his mission with clear success reminds him of the time when his mission started out in mystery and weakness. He sees again a bush which he once saw by a wayside. He is a young man again, a shepherd keeping his father-in-law's flock on the back side of the desert, by Mount Horeb. He sees once more the bush on fire. He draws near again with unshod feet, and once more in his aged ears he hears the voice out of the bush commissioning him for the great work of his life. With that impulse which I suppose we all have felt, that brings up at the close of any work the freshened memory of its beginning, this old man sees the burning bush again as he saw it years before, only with deeper understanding of its meaning,

and a completer sense of the love of God which it involved. He looks into the past, and all the mercy that had come in between, — all the miraculous food, and the wonderful victories, and the parted waters, and the constant guidance, — he sees now were all certainly involved in that first summons of God which he had once obeyed so blindly; and when he wants to give his people the benediction that represents to him the most complete and comprehensive love, it is touching to hear the old man go back and invoke "The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush."

Religion delights both in reminiscence and in anticipation. Being full of the sense of God, it finds a unity in life which no atheistic thought can discover. The identity of God's eternal being stretches under, and gives consistence to, our fragmentary lives. God's eternity makes our time coherent. And so it was God in the old bush that made it still visible to Moses across the eventful interval. He saw that bush when all the other bushes of Egypt had faded out of sight, because that bush was on fire with God. And as Christianity is the most vivid of all religions, with its personally manifested God, there is a more perfect unity in a Christian life than in any other. It keeps all its parts, and from its consummations looks back with gratitude and love to its beginnings. The crown that it casts before the throne at last is the same that it felt trembling on its brow in the first ecstatic sense of Christ's forgiveness, and that has been steadily glowing into greater clearness as perfecting love has more and more completely cast out fear. The feet that go up to God into the mountain, at the end, are the

same that first put off their shoes beside the burning bush. This is why the Christian, more than other men, not merely dares but loves to look back and remember.

But I wish to-day to call up this picture of Moses only in order to suggest a certain topic. We have the beginning and the ripening of an experience brought close together. Let us think of the young Christian and the old Christian : the same man in his first apprehension, and in his ripened knowledge, of Christ. What is the difference between the two? What is the growth which brings one into the other? Everybody claims that the Christian experience ripens and deepens. What is there riper and deeper in the full existence that there was not in the incipient life? This is the question which I want to study ; or, in other words, we may call our subject, — The nature and method of the growth of Christian character. I know that every Christian, old or young, will welcome such a study if it can unfold to us any of the rich and mysterious laws of the spiritual life.

One general and obvious law of all true growth suggests itself at once, which we will just point out before we go on to particulars. It is that every healthy growth creates the conditions of new growth, makes new growth possible. The illustrations are numberless everywhere. Every ray of sunlight that gives some ripeness to an apple makes the apple opener to more sunlight, which shall ripen it still more. Or, think of a nation ; every advance in liberty makes new advances not merely possible but necessary. Or, think of man ; the powers which develop either the physical or the men-

tal nature from fifteen years old to twenty open the mind and body to new influences which are to feed it from twenty to twenty-five. Every summer is also a spring-time. Indeed we may make this a test of growth. Every ray of sun which does not open the ground to new sunlight, is not feeding it but baking it. This is the true test of growing force. It opens the beautiful reactions between itself and the growing thing, and creates an openness for yet more of itself.

Now see how this is the method of all Christian growth. A child becomes a Christian. He learns, that is, to understand and claim the love of Christ. "I know that Christ loves me, and wants to train me," the glad young heart says. That consciousness makes the child's soul purer and more Christlike. Into that soul, become more Christly, a yet deeper sense of the love of Christ can enter to work a yet greater change. Then, to this still renewed soul, opens some newer vision of what Christ can do. This new work done unfolds some new capacity of loving and receiving love. And so, in this continual reaction between Christ and the soul,—every new openness fed with a new love that opens it still more,—the life-long, the eternal work goes on. Heaven will be only the fuller, prompter, more unhindered pulsing back and forth, between Christ and the soul, of this sublime and sweet reaction. This was the foundation of the certainty which Paul does for his Philippians when he told them that he was "confident of this very thing, that He who had begun a good work in them would perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." He foresaw for them what he had felt in himself,—that love would mean receptivity, that every

new love would bring a fuller knowledge, and every knowledge lay the soul open to a completer love.

But, just suggesting this, let us go on and try to particularize some of the sorts of difference between the young and the maturer Christian, and so see what sorts of growth this law of growth, which we have pointed out, will produce.

And, for one thing, I should say that as every Christian becomes more and more a Christian, there must be a larger and larger absorption of truth or doctrine into life. We hear all around us now-a-days a great impatience with the prominence of dogma—that is, of truth abstractly and definitely stated—in Christianity. And most of those who are thus impatient really mean well. They feel that Christianity, being a thing of personal salvation, ought to show itself in characters and lives. There they are right. But to decry dogma in the interest of character, is like despising food as if it interfered with health. Food is not health. The human body is built just so as to turn food into health and strength. And truth is not holiness. The human soul is made to turn, by the subtle chemistry of its digestive experience, truth into goodness. And this, I think, is just what the Christian, as he goes on, finds himself doing under God's grace. Before the young Christian lie the doctrines of his faith,—God's being, God's care, Christ's incarnation, Christ's atonement, immortality. What has the old Christian, with his long experience, done with them? He holds them no longer crudely, as things to be believed merely. He has taken them home into his nature. He has transmuted them into forms of life. God's being ap-

pears now filling his life with reverence. God's care clothes every act and thought of his with gratitude. Christ's incarnation is the inspiration of his new, dear love of all humanity. The atonement is the power of his all-pervading and deep-rooted faith. And immortality! He no longer thinks of that as a doctrine, which has become a great, constant flood of life, ever resting over and illuminating the far-off hill-tops — now grown so near, so real — of the eternal life. The young dogmatist boasts of his dogmas. The old saint lives his life. Both are natural in their places and times, as are the unripe and the ripened fruit. How soon you can tell the men whose soils have tugged at the roots of their doctrines and taken them in, and left them no longer lying on the surface, but made them germinate into life.

And in the second place, as a consequence of this feature of growth, there will come a growing variety in Christian character as Christians grow older. I think we should expect a uniformity and resemblance in younger Christians, and a diversity in older ones, because life is more various than doctrine. Each young Christian has his doctrine, crude and dogmatic still. The maturer Christians have not merely worked those doctrines into life, but each has worked them into his own sort of life. The truth is the same for all; the life it makes is infinite. The more deeply it has been digested, the more strongly the individuality comes out. The truth which God gives us is like the wheat that a bounteous country sends into the city. It is all the same wheat; but men go and buy it and eat it, and this same identical wheat is turned into different sorts

of force in different men. It is turned into bartering force in one, and thinking force in another, and singing force in another, and governing force in another. It is made manifold as soon as it passes into men. So I think every minister finds that, as his disciples grow older, if he has really succeeded in getting the truth to be their truth, they grow into more various forms of Christian charity and usefulness. Each grows more evidently to be not merely a Christian, but the Christian that God intended him to be. They think more. They think differently. The pure white light breaks itself to each in different colors. Often the minister is alarmed. His confirmation classes, which took the truths he taught them out of the Bible all alike, and went out all to the same work, — see how they have scattered; see how different they are! What does it mean? Merely this: it is doctrine passing, growing, into life. Those twelve disciples must have seemed very much like one another, as they all followed Jesus on the road, or sat around Him in the temple, drinking in His words. But see, after His words had become their life, how clear, distinct, and individual they are — John, Peter, James, Matthew. The seed looks the same; the flowers are so different. Let us rejoice in the clear individuality of maturing Christian life. Its one principle is still identical; and so it already prophesies heaven, where we are sure we shall be all different illustrations of the one same grace, showing different characters, set to different works but all moved by one spirit, all illustrations of the one same grace still.

And as individuality is developed with the deepening spiritual life, so I am sure that the willingness to recog-

nize and welcome individual differences of thought and feeling and action increases, too, as Christians grow riper. Seeing ourselves made more ourselves as our faith grows richer, we are glad to see other men made more themselves too. This is true charity. It is your undeveloped, crude, commonplace Christian who is uncharitable. He expects other Christians to be like himself. He has never felt that divine, deep movement of Christ in his own soul, telling him that from all eternity there has been one certain place for him to fill, one certain thing for him to be, and summoning him to come and fill his place and be himself; and so when some brother rises out of the crowd of undistinguishable believers, and goes out to stand upon his outpost, this other soul rebukes him, calls him arrogant, radical, wise beyond what is written, and foolish names like those. I can well understand that the seeds in a sower's basket might be very uncharitable to one brother-seed that had dropped out of the basket and taken root and grown to be a stalk of corn. It is too unlike them. It is too original and singular. But let them all fall together and take root, and then, with life in all of them, they will not compare their ears and tassels, each being so busy in growing to the best that its separate bit of earth can bring it to. The true Christian charity is that which life teaches. It is the tried and cultured souls that understand each other's trials and cultures, though they be wholly different from their own. And no sight is more beautiful than to see this grace growing in a body of believers.

It helps us much, I think, if we can recognize the fitness of this progress. Narrowness of view and sympathy

is not unnatural in a new believer. It is very unnatural in the maturer Christian life. In the one it is the sourness of unripe fruit, showing only unripeness; in the other it is the sourness of a ripe apple or of an apple that ought to be ripe, and proves cramped and stunted life. The figures which most naturally suggest themselves are these of vegetable life, when we are talking of growth of any sort. I do not say that it is best for the young Christian to be illiberal. Far better certainly if he could leap at once to the full comprehension and the wide charity which the older Christian gathers out of the experience of life. But, as a fact, it is too apt to be the case that only by experience does the Christian reach this breadth of sympathy, which comes not from indifference, but from the profoundest personal earnestness. It is something wholly different from the loose toleration which some men praise, which is negative, which cares nothing about what is absolutely true or false. This is positive. It holds fast to its certain truths, well proved, long tried. Just because those truths have laid intense hold upon its deepest soul, and become its truths in its own shapes, it expects and rejoices to see them, the same truths still, becoming other men's in their own shapes. This is the only true Christian charity, the only charity that rejoiceth in the truth.

And here comes in another noble characteristic of the growing spiritual experience, its ever-increasing independence. This is the best personal result of charity. There is an independence which is arrogant and defiant, and there is a dependence that is weak and fawning. Both come of narrowness. Both are the signs of imma-

ture and meagre life. One man arms himself against his brethren because he holds them to be wholly wrong and himself wholly right. Another man yields to his brethren because he fears that he is wrong and they are right. There is a man of mellow strength who, deeply conscious of the work the Lord has done in him, made sure of it by long feeling the very pressures of God's hand kneading the truth into his nature, stands by that work ; will let no man cavil it away from his tenacious consciousness ; is so perfectly dependent upon Christ that he can hang upon no fellow-man ; respects himself by the same reverence for the individuality of the divine life that makes him also respect his brethren.

The analogies between a man's life and the world's life are so continually suggested that one often wonders whether there be not some analogy here ; whether some such progress into charity by the very positiveness of faith, may not be possible, may not be coming as the final solution of all these problems which keep the world so full of jealousy and strife. At present it seems to be assumed that narrowness is essential to positive belief, and that toleration can be reached only by general indifference. Not long ago I read this sentence in what many hold to be our ablest and most thoughtful journal : " It is a law, which in the present condition of human nature holds good, that strength of conviction is always in the inverse ratio of the tolerant spirit." If that is so, then the present condition of human nature is certainly very much depraved. But if human nature ever can be rescued by a personal salvation, if mankind can ever become possessed by the Spirit of God, lifting the mass by filling the individuals

each with his own strong manifestation of its power, then the world may still see some maturer type of Christianity, in which new ages of positive faith may still be filled with the broadest sympathy, and men tolerate their brethren without enfeebling themselves. Such ages may God hasten.

Let us pass on. I think another sign of the growth of Christian character is to be found in what we may call the growing transfiguration of duty. See what I mean. To every young Christian the new service of Christ comes largely with the look of a multitude of commandments. They throng around his life, each one demanding to be obeyed. He welcomes them joyously. He takes up his tasks with glad hands still, because they are his Master's tasks. But as he grows older in grace, is there no difference? Tell me, you who have long been the servants of our dear and gracious Lord, has there come in your long Christian life no change in the whole aspect of your service? Has not your more and more intimate sympathy with Him let you in behind many and many a duty which once seemed dark and hard, and allowed you to see the light of His loving intention burning there? Have you not grown into a clearer and deeper understanding of what Jesus meant by those sweet and wonderful words, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you"? In every opening Christian life there is something Mosaic, something Hebrew. The order of the Testaments is somewhat repeated in the experience of every believer. At last, in the fulness of

time, the New Testament has perfectly come. The law is given first, and then grace and truth come by Jesus Christ. It is no sudden transformation. It cannot be, because it cannot come otherwise than by the gradual teaching of life. But when it has wholly come, then, full of the complete consciousness of Christ, duty is done not simply because Christ has commanded it and we love Him, but because Christ has filled us with Himself, transformed our standards, recreated our affections, and we love the duty too, seeing its essential beauty as He sees it, out of whose nature it proceeds. I am sure that such a change does come both in our active and our passive duties. The fight that we must fight, or the sickness that we must bear, both change from tasks, to be done because He commands them, into privileges which we embrace because we love them. Do we not all feel the change that had come between Paul crying submissively "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" looking to an outside Christ for commandment, and the same Paul crying "Not I live but Christ liveth in me!" rejoicing in the inspiration of an inward Savior? This was the perfect victory after which Paul was always longing so intensely. It did not come perfectly to him in this world. It cannot to any of us. Dependent as it is upon the knowledge of Christ by the soul, it cannot be perfect till the soul's knowledge of Christ shall be perfect in heaven. Here we must always see duty, like God, "in a glass, darkly;" only there "face to face." But as it begins to come here, duty already begins to be transfigured before us. It puts on its divinity. Its face shines as the sun. Its raiment, which seemed cold, becomes white as the light. Already we see its beauty.

Already we see how we shall love it some day ; and we cry out like the apostles, " Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let us stay here where duty is seen to be nothing but the glorious atmosphere of Thy personal will."

But this brings us to what after all we must hold to be the profoundest and most reliable sign of the maturing spiritual life. All these of which we have been speaking are only secondary symptoms of the great privilege of the Christian, which is deepening personal intimacy with Him who is the Christian's life, the Lord Jesus Christ. All comes to that at last. Christianity begins with many motives. It all fastens itself at last upon one motive, which does not exclude, but is large enough to comprehend all that is good in all the rest, " That I may know Him." Those are Paul's words. How constantly we come back to his large, rounded life, as the picture of what the Christian is and becomes. If I could set before you the young man at Damascus and the old man at Rome, and bid you compare the two, this sermon I am preaching need not have been begun. " That I may know Him." We have all seen, I am sure, if it has been our privilege to watch true Christians growing old, the special and absorbing way with which the personal Christ, their knowledge of Him, and His knowledge of them, comes to be all their religion. You hear them talk of Him, and it seems already as if their lives had entered into that heaven, which, as we read the mystic description of it in the book of Revelations, seems to consist in His personality. He is its temple ; He is its sun ; His name is written on the foreheads of its happy saints. Indeed Christ, to the Christian growing older, seems to be what the sun is to the

developing day, which it lightens from the morning to the evening. When the sun is in the zenith in the broad noon-day, men do their various works by his light; but they do not so often look up to him. It is the sunlight that they glory in, flooding a thousand tasks with clearness, making a million things beautiful. But as the world rolls into the evening, it is the sun itself at sunset that men gather to look at and admire and love. So to the earlier and middle stages of a Christian life, Christ is the revealer of duty and truth; and duty and truth become clear and dear in His light. The young Christian glories in the way in which, under his Master's power, he can work for humanity, for truth, for his nation, for society, for his family. But as the Christian life ripens into evening, it is not these things, though they are not forgotten, that the soul dwells on most. It is the Lord Himself. It is that He is the soul's, and the soul is His. It is His wondrousness, His dearness, and His truth, that fill the life as it presses closer to where He stands, — as the setting earth rolls on towards the sun.

And this is philosophical. It is strictly in accordance with the whole nature of our religion that it should thus grow. It cannot be perfect all at once. For Christianity is knowing Christ, and personal knowledge can come only by experience; and experience takes time. A truth you may embrace, and embrace completely, so soon as you understand the terms of its statement and have learned its evidence. But you cannot bring a person, as you can a proposition, up to a man, and say "Here, know him!" as you say "Know this!" and be at once obeyed. "I cannot," he replies. "However

thoroughly you vouch for him, I cannot know him till he shows himself to me. I thank you for bringing him to me. I thank you more than if I could know him all at once, for if he is really all you say, then there lies before me a long career of gradual knowledge that shall be all delight to me till I shall know him perfectly." This seems to me one difference of Christians. Make Christianity a doctrinal system, and when your new disciple has learned his catechism, he is all done; and pretty soon you will find him sitting with his hands in his lap, complaining that there is nothing more to learn, and either finding his well-learned faith dull and uninteresting, or supplementing it with dogmatic speculations of his own. Make Christianity a personal knowledge of Christ, and then, with ever new enticements, each little that he knows opening to him something more to know of the infinite personal life, obedience feeding love, and love stimulating obedience, he presses on in the never stale, never weary ambition of "knowing Christ."

Far be it from me to think or talk as if there were two religions, one for the young Christian and one for the older; as if the power of the personal Christ were not present to waken the first good desire of the new life, as it is at last to crown the victorious well-doer kneeling on the steps of the throne. I pointed out, in opening, that just this — the continuous presence of a manifested God — is what makes the unity of the Christian life. Do not misunderstand me then. I turn to the youngest child just beginning to try to do right, and I see the little hand clasped in the hand of a Savior who is holding it close, who is watching the feeble feet, who is bending over and listening to his prayers. But

just because that child has already tasted the power of a present Christ, he is able to comprehend the beauty of the life you offer him when you tell him that it is all to be the development of that relationship in which he finds himself already, the deepening of that friendship between him and his Lord.

There is as yet no culture, no method of progress known to men, that is so rich and complete as that which is ministered by a truly great friendship. No natural appetite, no artificial taste, no rivalry of competition, no contagion of social activity, calls out such a large, healthy, symmetrical working of a human nature, as the constant, half-unconscious power of a friend's presence whom we thoroughly respect and love. In a true friendship there is emulation without its jealousy ; there is imitation without its servility. When one friend teaches another by his present life, there is none of that divorce of truth from feeling, and of feeling from truth, which in so many of the world's teachings makes truth hard, and feeling weak ; but truth is taught, and feeling is inspired, by the same action of one nature on the other, and they keep each other true and warm. Surely there is no more beautiful sight to see in all this world, — full as it is of beautiful adjustments and mutual ministrations, — than the growth of two friends' natures who, as they grow old together, are always fathoming, with newer needs, deeper depths of each other's life, and opening richer veins of one another's helpfulness. And this best culture of personal friendship is taken up and made, in its infinite completion, the gospel method of the progressive saving of the soul by Christ.

When we get this idea of Christianity, there is noth-

ing strange in the halo of dearness which, to every Christian, hangs around the scenes with which the beginning of his new life is associated. The place where two friends first met is sacred to them all through their friendship — all the more sacred as their friendship deepens and grows old. It is the same sort of feeling which sent the heart of Moses back to the bush. And to how many a saint the day and place where he first heard God's voice will be earth's one sacred memory, even long after earth's life is over. Do you think that Moses will not speak of the bush, and Samuel of the little temple-chamber, and Peter and John of their boats on the still lake, and Paul of the Damascus road, and Matthew of his tax-table, and the poor woman of the wayside well, when they are met above? Only the last day shall tell how much of earth is hallowed ground. This is what makes the old churches holy with an accumulated sacredness which surpasses their first consecration. Who can tell how many this church of ours will find among the blessed to honor and treasure her forever, that she may not be forgotten when the birth-places of souls are remembered? This has always been the feeling of the world about Palestine, the land where the world first knew Christ, — sometimes breaking out into a crusade for its recovery; sometimes cheering the weariness of pilgrims who were struggling on to see Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives before they died; sometimes showing itself in the mystical transfer of the names of Palestinian geography to the hills and valleys, the heights and depths of the spiritual life. A recent English scholar has pointed out how often St. Paul's religious thought looked back to the scene of Stephen's

martyrdom, where, as he stood by and held the murderers' clothes, his own first earnest interest in Christianity was blindly stirred. Paul's speech at Antioch reminds us throughout of Stephen's defence before his judges. Paul's address at Athens uses some of Stephen's very words. Several of Paul's most difficult and deepest phrases in his Epistles seem to correspond with forms of thought which the martyr had uttered years before, and which had sunk into the mind of the thoughtful young Jew. It is indeed a goodly spirit that treasures its past miracles, that goes down the gracious avenues of life to find the bushes out of which it first heard God's voice.

But come back for a few moments to our thought about the personal presence of Christ becoming clearer to us as we grow riper in the Christian life. Let me point out, in a word or two, three or four of the effects that it must produce, which are the noble characteristics of the maturest Christians :

First, it must give us a more infinite view of life in general, or, in other words, must make us more unworldly. To be always living with One whose kingdom is not of this world ; to be constantly conversant, as we hold intercourse with Him, with the thought that there are other worlds also over which He presides, and with which we have something to do through our union with Him, — how this breaks up and scatters the littleness of life, the bondage of the seen. How it lets us out, free to trace the course of every action, the career of every thought, as it seeks vast untold issues in other spheres. More and more terrible appears to me the crowding in of life, its inability to scale and grasp the

things that it was made for. Even our religion busies itself with little temporal duties, with church machineries and observances. What is there that can lift it all, and enlarge it and let it free, except the constant known presence of One who is infinite and who lives in infinity — the God of eternity made known to us as our beloved Christ?

And, if we get this, then something else must come, namely, more hopefulness. St. Paul has a noble verse which says that "experience worketh hope." It must, if it is full of Christ. The soul that is getting deeper and deeper into the certain knowledge of Him must be learning that it has no right to fear; that however hopeless things look there can be nothing but success for every good cause in the hand of Christ. It is a noble process for a man's life that gradually changes the cold dogma that "truth is strong and must prevail" into a warm enthusiastic certainty that "my Christ must conquer." It is terrible to see a man calling himself a Christian who despairs more of the world the longer that he lives in it. It shows that he is letting the world's darkness come between him and his Lord's light. It shows that he is not near enough to Christ.

And with the growing hopefulness there comes a growing courage. How timid we are at first. I become a Christian, and it seems as if just to get this soul of mine saved were all that I could dare to try; but as the Savior's strength becomes more manifest to me, as I know Him more, I see that He is able to do much more than that. I begin to aspire to have a little part in the great conquest of the world in which He is engaged. And so the Soldier of the Cross at last is out in

the very thick of the battle, striking at all his Master's enemies in the perfect assurance of his Master's strength.

And then, as the crown of all these, there comes to the maturing Christian, out of his constant companionship with Christ, that true and perfect poise of soul which I think grows more and more beautiful as we get tired, one after another, of the fantastic and one-sided types of character which the world admires, and which seem to us very attractive at first. Expectant without impatience; patient without stagnation; waiting, but always ready to advance; loving to advance, but always ready to wait; full of confidence, but never proud; full of certainty, but never arrogant; serene, but enthusiastic; rich as a great land is rich in the peace that comes to it from the government of a great, wise, trusty governor,—this is the life whose whole power is summed up in one word—Faith. “Here is the patience and faith of the saints.” This is the life to which men come who, through long years, “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.”

“The good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush.” I have tried to depict what comes between the Bush and the Mountain, what it is on which the aged follower of Christ looks back; what it is to which the young follower of Christ looks forward. Some of you are standing as Moses stood,—the desert crossed, the promised land almost entered, the work done lying back behind you. I know not where it was,—in some church-pew, in some closet's privacy, in some stillness or some crowd,—years ago the fire came; the common life about you burned with the sudden presence of Divinity;

God called you, and you gave yourself to God. I bid you look back and see the mercy that has led you ever since, and strengthen your hope and courage and charity and faith as you remember the long, long good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush. And some of you I hope, I know, are standing just by the bush-side still, the shoes off your feet, the voice of God in your ears, lifted up with the desire for the new life of Christ. You are determined to be His, for He has called you. Well, till the end, life here and hereafter will be only the unfolding of this personal love which seems to you so dear and so mysterious now. Christ will grow realler, nearer, more completely your Master and your Savior all your life. That is the whole of your religion. But as you go on you will find that that is enough, that it is more than eternity can exhaust. The mercy which takes you into its bosom at last in heaven, will be still the old familiar good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush.

IV.

THE PILLAR IN GOD'S TEMPLE.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, . . . and my new name.” — REV. iii. 12.

IT is very many years since these great words were sent abroad into a world of struggle. We can hardly read them without remembering on what countless souls they have fallen in a shower of strength. Men and women everywhere, wrestling with life, have heard the promise to “him that overcometh ;” and, though much of the imagery in which the promise was conveyed was blind to them, though they very vaguely identified their conflict with the battle which these far-off people in the Book of the Revelation were engaged in fighting, still, the very sound of the words has brought them inspiration. Let us study the promise a little more carefully this morning. Perhaps it will always be worth more to us if we do. A text which we have once studied is like a star upon which we have once looked through the telescope. We always see it afterwards, full of the brightness and color which that look showed us. Even if it grows dim behind a cloud, or other nearer stars seem to outshine it, we never think it dull or small after we have once looked deep into its depths.

“To him that overcometh,” reads the promise ; and

the first thing that we want to understand is what the struggle is in which the victory is to be won. It is the Savior Christ who speaks. His voice comes out of the mystery and glory of heaven to the church in Philadelphia, and this book, in which His words are written, stands last in the New Testament. The gospel story is all told. The work of incarnation and redemption is all done. Jesus has gone back to His Father, and now is speaking down to men and women on the earth, who are engaged there in the special struggle for which He has prepared the conditions, and to which it has been the purpose of His life and death to summon them. Let us remember that. It is a special struggle. It is not the mere human fight with pain and difficulty which every living mortal meets. It is not the wrestling for place, for knowledge, for esteem, for any of the prizes which men covet. Nay, it is not absolutely the struggle after righteousness; it is not the pure desire and determination to escape from sin, considered simply as the aspiration of a man's own nature and the determination of a man's own will. It is not to these that Christ looks down and sends His promise. He had called out a special struggle on the earth. He had bidden men struggle after goodness, out of love and gratitude and loyalty to Him.

If the motive, everywhere and always, is the greatest and most important part of every action, then there must always be a difference between men who are striving to do right and not to do wrong, according to the love which sets them striving. If it is love of themselves, their struggle will be one thing. If it is love of the abstract righteousness, it will be another. If it is love of

Christ, it will be still another. Jesus is talking to the men and women there among the Asian mountains, and to the hosts of men and women who were to come after them upon the earth, who should be fighters against sin, against their own sin, who should struggle to be pure and brave and true and spiritual and unselfish, because they loved Christ, because He had lived and died for them, because they belonged to Him, because He would be honored and pleased by their goodness, grieved and dishonored by their wickedness; because by goodness they would come into completer sympathy with Him, and gain a fuller measure of His love. It is to men and women in this struggle that Christ speaks, and promises them the appropriate reward which belongs to perseverance and success in just that obedience of loyalty and love.

For one of the discoveries that we make, as soon as we grow thoughtful about life at all, is that the world is not merely full of struggle, but full of many kinds of struggle, which vary very much in value. We begin by very broad and superficial classifications. Men are happy or unhappy; men are wise or foolish; men are generous or stingy. But by and by such broad divisions will not satisfy us. The great regions into which we have classified our fellow-men begin to break up and divide. There are all kinds of happiness, all kinds of wisdom, all kinds of generosity. It means little to us, when we have once found this out, to be told that a man is happy, wise, or generous, until we have learned also the special quality of this quality as it appears in him, how he came to possess it, and how he works it out in life. And so in all the world-full of struggling men,

as we observe them we find by and by that there are differences. A great, broad mass of eager, dissatisfied, expectant faces it appears at first; a wild and restless tossing hither and thither, as if a great ship had broken asunder in mid-ocean, and her frightened people, with one common fear and dread of being drowned, were struggling indiscriminately in the waves. But at last all that changes, and we wonder how it ever could have looked so to us. Struggle comes to seem as various as life. The objects for which men struggle, and the strength by which men struggle, grow endlessly various. And then, among the mass that seemed one general and monotonous turmoil, there stand out these — there shine out these — whose struggle is against sin, for holiness, and by the love of Christ. Other men struggle against poverty, against neglect; for ease, for power, for fame; and by the love of self, the noble abstract love of righteousness; but, scattered through the whole mass thickly enough to give it character and add a new, controlling strain to the eternal music of aspiring discontent which rises from the swarm of human living, there are these strugglers against sin, by the love of Christ. They are by your side. They are in your houses. They meet you in the street. Your children are catching sight of that struggle, and its fascination and its power, in the times when they are silent and thoughtful, and seem to be passing out of your familiar understanding. Your friend, whose carelessness concerning the things about which you are eager seems so strange to you, is careless about them only because he is fighting a deeper fight. He is fighting against sin, by the love of Christ. Therefore, he does not dread the poverty and the unpopularity against which your selfishness makes you so eager to fear and fight.

This then is the peculiar struggle to the victory in which Christ, out of heaven, gives His promise. And now the promise can be understood if we understand the struggle. The two belong together. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." The ideas of the pillar in a building, in a temple, are these two: incorporation and permanence. The pillar is part of the structure; and when it is once set in its place it is to be there as long as the temple stands. How clear the picture stands before us. There is a great, bright, solemn temple, where men come to worship. Its doors are ever open; its windows tempt the sky. There are many and many things which have to do with such a temple. The winds come wandering through its high arches. Perhaps the birds stray in and build their nests, and stray away again when the short summer is done. The children roam across its threshold, and play for a few moments on its shining floor. Banners and draperies are hung upon its walls awhile, and then carried away. Poor men and women, with their burdens and distress, come in and say a moment's prayer, and hurry out. Stately processions pass from door to door, making a brief disturbance in its quiet air. Generation after generation comes and goes and is forgotten, each giving its place up to another; while still the temple stands, receiving and dismissing them in turn, and outliving them all. All these are transitory. All these come into the temple and then go out again. But a day comes when the great temple needs enlargement. The plan which it embodies must be made more perfect. It is to grow to a completer self. And then they bring up to the doors a

column of cut stone, hewn in the quarry for this very place, fitted and fit for this place and no other ; and, bringing it in with toil, they set it solidly down as part of the growing structure, part of the expanding plan. It blends with all the other stones. It loses while it keeps its individuality. It is useless, except there where it is ; and yet there, where it is, it has a use which is peculiarly its own, and different from every other stone's. The walls are built around it. It shares the building's changes. The reverence that men do to the sacred place falls upon it. The lights of sacred festivals shine on its face. It glows in the morning sunlight, and grows dim and solemn as the dusk gathers through the great expanse. Generations pass before it in their worship. They come and go, and the new generations follow them, and still the pillar stands. The day when it was hewn and set there is forgotten ; as children never think when an old patriarch, whom they see standing among them, was born. It is part of the temple where the men so long dead set it so long ago. From the day that they set it there, it " goes no more out."

Can we not see perfectly the meaning of the figure ? There are men and women everywhere who have something to do with God. They cannot help touching and being touched by Him, and His vast purposes, and the treatment which He is giving to the world. They cross and recross the pavement of His providence. They come to Him for what they want, and He gives it to them, and they carry it away. They ask Him for bread, and then carry it off into the chambers of their own selfishness and eat it. They ask Him for power, and then go off to the battlefields or workshops of their own self-

ishness and use it. They are forever going in and out of the presence of God. They sweep through His temple like the wandering wind; or they come in like the chance worshipper, and bend a moment's knee before the altar. And then there are the other men who are struggling to escape from sin, by the love of Christ. How different they are. The end of everything for them is to get to Christ, and put themselves in Him, and stay there. They do not so much want to get to Christ that they may get away from sin, as they want to get away from sin that they may get to Christ. God is to them not merely a great helper of their plans; He is the sum of all their plans, the end of all their wishes, the Being to whom their souls say, not "Lord, help me do what I will;" but, "Lord, show me Thy will that I may make it mine, and serve myself in serving Thee." When such a soul as that comes to Christ, it is like the day when the marble column from the quarry was dragged up and set into the temple aisle. Such a soul becomes part of the great purpose of God. It can go no more out. It has no purpose or meaning outside of God. Its life is hid there in the sacred aisles of God's life. If God's life grows dark, the dusk gathers around this pillar which is set in it. If God's life brightens, the pillar burns and glows. Men who behold this soul, think instantly of God. They cannot picture the pillar outside of the temple; they cannot picture the soul outside of the fear, the love, the communion, the obedience of God.

The New Testament abounds with this idea and the discrimination which we have been trying to make. When the Prodigal Son comes back to his Father, he cries out, "I am not worthy to be called Thy son;

make me as one of Thy hired servants ; ” but the Father answers, “ This, My son, was dead, and is alive again ; ” and the pillar is set up in the temple. When Jesus looks into His disciples’ faces at the last supper, He says : “ Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth ; but I have called you friends, for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” The servant is the drapery hung upon the nails ; the friend is the pillar built into the wall. Paul writes to the Romans : “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” It is the calm assurance of the pillar which feels the pressure of the wall around it, and defies any temptation to entice it, or any force to tear it away.

Nor is there anything unphilosophical, or unintelligible, or merely mystical in all this. The same thing essentially occurs everywhere. Two men both come to know another man, richer and larger than either of them. Something called friendship grows up between each of them and him. But the first of the two men who seek this greater man, comes and goes into and out of his great neighbor’s life. He keeps the purposes of his own life distinct. He comes to his rich friend for knowledge, for strength, for inspiration, and then he carries them off and uses them for his own ends. The other friend gives up all ends in life which he has

valued, and makes this new man's, this greater man's purposes, his. He wants what this great man wants, because this great man wants it. Naturally and easily we say that he "lives in" this other man. By and by you cannot conceive of him as separate from this greater life. The reward of his loving devotion is that he is made a pillar in the temple of his friend, and goes no more out.

Two men both love their country. One loves her because of the advantage that he gets from her, the help that she gives to his peculiar interests. The other loves her for herself, for her embodiment of the ideas which he believes are truest and divinest and most human. One uses the country. The other asks the country to use him. One goes into the country's service and gathers up money or knowledge or strength, and then, as it were, goes out and carries them with him to help the tasks which he has to do in his own private life. The other takes all his private interests, and sacrifices them to the country's good. And what is the reward of this supreme devotion, which there will always be some little group of supremely patriotic men ready to make in every healthy state? Will they not belong to the state, and will it not belong continually to them? They will never be lost out of its history. They will become its pillars and share its glory, as they helped to support its life.

The same is true about the church. There are the multitudes who go in and out, who count the church as theirs, who gather from her thought, knowledge, the comfort of good company, the sense of safety; and then there are others who think they truly, as the light phrase

so deeply means, "belong to the church." They are given to it, and no compulsion could separate them from it. They are part of its structure. They are its pillars. Here and hereafter they can never go out of it. Life would mean nothing to them outside the church of Christ.

And, to give just one more example, so it is with truth. The men who seek truth for what she has to give them, who want to be scholars for the emoluments, the honors, the associations, which scholarship will bring, these are the men who will turn away from truth so soon as she has given them her gifts, and leave herself dishonored, — who will turn away from any truth which has no gifts to give. But, always, there are a few seekers who want truth's self, and not her gifts. Once scholars, they are scholars always. They really put their lives into the structure of the world's advancing knowledge. There those lives always remain, like solid stones for the scholarship of the years to come to build upon. There is no world conceivable to which their souls can go, where they will not turn to seek what it is possible there for souls like theirs to know.

Thus everywhere, in every interest of human life, there is a deeper entrance and a more permanent abiding which is reserved for those who have come into the profoundest sympathy with its principles, and the most thorough unselfish consecration to its work. Come back, then, from these illustrations, to the Christian life, and see there the larger exhibition of the same law which they illustrate. God is the Governor of all the world. The purpose of His government, the one design on which it all proceeds, is that the whole world, through obedience to

Him, should be wrought into His likeness, and made the utterance of His character. Let that thought dwell before your mind, and feel, as you must feel, what a sublime and glorious picture it involves. Then remember that God does not treat the world in one great, vague generality. He sees the world all made up of free souls, of men and women. The world can become like Him by obedience, only as the souls of men and women become like Him by obedience. Each soul, your soul and mine, must enter into that consummation, must realize the idea of that picture by itself, by its own free submission; helped, no doubt, by the movement of souls all about it, and by the great promise of the world's salvation, but yet acting for itself, by its own personal resolve. To each soul, then, to yours and mine, God brings all the material of this terrestrial struggle, — all the temptations, all the disappointments, all the successes, all the doubts and perplexities, all the jarring of interests, all the chances of hinderance and chances of help which come flocking about every new-born life. The struggle begins, begins with every living creature, is beginning to-day with these boys and girls about you, just as you can remember that years and years ago it began with you. What is it to succeed in that struggle? What success shall you set before them to excite their hope and energy? On what success shall you congratulate yourself? Is it success in the struggle of life simply to get through with decency and die without disgrace or shame? Is it success in the struggle of life just to have so laid hold on God's mercy, to have so made our peace with Him, that we know we shall not be punished for our sins? Is it success in the

struggle of life even to have so lived in His presence that every day has been bright with the sense that He was taking care of us? These things are very good; but if the purpose of God's government of the world and of us is what I said, then the real victory in the struggle can be nothing less than the accomplishment in us of that which it is the object of all His government to accomplish in the world. When, truly obedient, we have been made like Him whom we obey, then, only then, we have overcome in the struggle of life. And then we must be pillars in His temple. With wills harmonized with His will; with souls that love and hate in truest unison of sympathy with His; with no purposes left in us but His purposes, — then we have come to what He wants the world to come to. We have taken our places in the slowly rising temple of His will. To whatever worlds He carries our souls when they shall pass out of these imprisoning bodies, in those worlds these souls of ours shall find themselves part of the same great temple; for it belongs not to this earth alone. There can be no end of the universe where God is, to which that growing temple does not reach, the temple of a creation to be wrought at last into a perfect utterance of God by a perfect obedience to God.

O my dear friends, that is the victory that is awaiting you. Slowly, through all the universe, that temple of God is being built. Wherever, in any world, a soul, by free-willed obedience, catches the fire of God's likeness, it is set into the growing walls, a living stone. When, in your hard fight, in your tiresome drudgery, or in your terrible temptation, you catch the purpose of your being, and give yourself to God, and so give Him the chance to

give Himself to you, your life, a living stone, is taken up and set into that growing wall. And the other living, burning stones claim and welcome and embrace it. They bind it in with themselves. They make it sure with their assurance, and they gather sureness out of it. The great wall of divine likeness through human obedience grows and grows, as one tried and purified and ripened life after another is laid into it; and down at the base, the corner-stone of all, there lies the life of Him who, though He was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and, being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

In what strange quarries and stone-yards the stones for that celestial wall are being hewn ! Out of the hill-sides of humiliated pride ; deep in the darkness of crushed despair ; in the fretting and dusty atmosphere of little cares ; in the hard, cruel contacts that man has with man ; wherever souls are being tried and ripened, in whatever commonplace and homely ways ; — there God is hewing out the pillars for His temple. O, if the stone can only have some vision of the temple of which it is to lie a part forever, what patience must fill it as it feels the blows of the hammer, and knows that success for it is simply to let itself be wrought into what shape the Master wills.

Upon the pillar thus wrought into the temple of God's loving kingdom there are three inscriptions. I can only in one word ask you to remember what they are : " I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and my new name."

The soul that in obedience to God is growing into His likeness, is dedicated to the divine love, to the hope of the perfect society, and to the ever new knowledge of redemption and the great Redeemer. Those are its hopes ; and, reaching out forever and ever, all through eternity, those hopes it never can exhaust. Those writings on the pillar shall burn with purer and brighter fire the longer that the pillar stands in the temple of Him whom Jesus calls "My God."

May all this great promise ennoble and illumine the struggle of our life ; keep us from ever thinking that it is mean and little ; lift us above its details while it keeps us forever faithful to them ; and give us victory at last through Him who has already overcome.

V.

THE EYE OF THE SOUL.

“The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”—MATT. vi. 22.

It sometimes seems to me as if, in our Christian earnestness and eagerness to establish the authority of the words of Jesus, and to enforce their application, we were in danger of neglecting to seek their deepest meaning and full interpretation. These three questions every thoughtful and conscientious disciple must ask about his Master: first, Why should I believe His teachings? third, What ought my belief in His teachings to make me do? but certainly also, second, What do His teachings mean? Without the serious asking and careful answering of this second question, the answering of the first question must be well-nigh useless, and the correct and full answering of the third question must be, in great degree, impossible.

All this is true of every word of Jesus; but it is specially true with regard to certain great words of His, in which it seems as if He summed up the principles of His teaching, and gave a comprehensive statement of His work. Such words there are; words which rise like mountains in the midst of His discourse, and seem to draw up, into conclusive points, the whole expanse of His great teaching. They are not deliberate and formal.

He does not turn aside from His work of saving the world, to deliver lectures on theology. These comprehensive words of His grow naturally out of the ordinary circumstances and conversations into which He fell ; but in them there meet the currents of His thought, and the great final truths of man and God lie open to the mind that reverently tries to understand them. Surely such words tempt and deserve our most reverent and loving study.

It is one of these words of Jesus that I have chosen for my text this morning. I choose it because it seems to me to have something to say very directly to some of the questions about the possibility of knowing about God, and the way of knowing about God, which one hears asked with most astonishing frequency and most impressive earnestness in these days and places. In this utterance Jesus, I think, makes it wonderfully clear how man must hope to know those spiritual things, without some knowledge of which the heart of man is not and cannot be content ; after which man is forever struggling ; and the despair of which makes the great gloom which in these days seems, to some prophets, to be settling down upon the human soul.

Jesus builds all His teaching upon an illustrative figure which every one could then, and can always, understand. "The light of the body is the eye," He said. Try to get the picture back before your mind. These words are part of the Sermon on the Mount. On a bright, fresh morning, Jesus is sitting half-way up a hillside in Galilee, with a group of attentive hearers clustered at his side. All around Him is the radiant landscape. Almost at the mountain's foot the lake of

Galilee is flashing in the morning sun. The soft rounded hills roll away like waves on every side, the quiet valleys nestling in between them. Here and there the little white villages give life and movement to the scene. The birds fly through the air; the cattle are plodding at their tasks; all the earth seems bright and fresh and clear, full of vitality and beauty. And then here, close around Him, are these men with all their sensitiveness, all their human power to enjoy and understand this world, — these men whose understanding and enjoyment of it seem to give worthiness and dignity to all this outward nature. They are the other half of the picture in the mind of Jesus. Nature and man, these two, make up the world for Him. The hills and rocks and trees and beasts and villages, and the sun shining on them all, — that on one side; and on the other, — man, with his power of knowing what all these things mean, of loving them, of thinking about them, of using them. The world of nature radiant with light; the soul of man rich in intelligence, — these two facing and claiming each other on that bright morning in Syria, as they have faced and claimed each other every day since God said, "Let us make man," and Adam began to live in Eden. And now, as Jesus looks at all this, He begins to praise the human eye. "The light of the body is the eye," He says. What does He mean by that? Is it not that He is rejoicing in the one appointed channel through which these two halves of the world may come into connection? Nature and man must stand apart, not two halves of one world, but two separate worlds, were it not for that marvellous and precious avenue of sight which brings the two

together, and lets the man, with his inner power of knowledge, know the outer world. Through it, the Lake of Galilee and beautiful Mount Tabor in the distance, — aye, and the dear, sweet face of the Lord himself, — flow in upon the soul of John, and become a part of him. Without the eye the world might still be real; but it must be forever unknowable to this man, able to know it, but sitting in the prison of his sightlessness where all the glory cannot reach him. He opens the window of his eye and it all comes pouring in; runs through his frame and finds out his intelligence; says to his brain: "Here I am, know me!" Says to his heart: "Here I am, love me!" To the man sitting in darkness, the whole bright world has sprung to life; and the window of the prison, the gateway of the entering glory, the light of the body is the eye.

So Jesus spoke; and we can well imagine that His words awoke some new grateful delight in their own blessed power of vision among those thoughtful men who heard Him. But it was not for that purpose that he had spoken. He was not lecturing on optics. The visible world, and its entrance to the human intelligence through the eye, was but an illustration. His thought was aimed through the illustration at that which it was the purpose of His life to teach mankind. He was thinking of the world of unseen, invisible, spiritual life; and what He meant to say by His suggestive picture must have been that that world, too, must and could testify itself, report itself to the human intelligence through its appropriate channel of communication, just exactly as the world of visible nature manifests and reports itself through the organ of the eye. Now it is just the exist-

ence of that spiritual world, and the possibility of man's being in communication with it, intelligently knowing it, intelligently loving it,—that it is about which man's profoundest hopes and fears have always clustered, about which they are clustering to-day, perhaps more anxiously than ever yet. It is a world certainly that is conceivable. The invisible may at least be imagined, whether it can be believed or not. All man's mental history bears witness that he can picture to himself a world in which the true existences are souls instead of bodies ; where the forces are not those which any physics can measure, but the temptations and aspirations which only the spiritual life can feel ; where the issues are not those of physical growth or catastrophe, but of the culture or decay of character ; and whose central sun, the source and fountain of whose life, is not a burning globe hung in the heavens, but a personal God who feeds all the souls of His children with His love, and guides them by His wisdom, and blesses or punishes them by His judgment. Those are the components of that spiritual world, the human soul and God. No man has ever seen either of them. They cannot report themselves through the eye. But Jesus says that the world of which they are the constituents is a real world ; and that though the eye cannot give them admission to the intelligence to which all worlds must report themselves before they can become part of the life of man, there is an organ which is to this world of spiritual life what the eye of the body is to a world of trees and lakes.

And what then is that organ ? The name by which it is best known is Conscience ; and, though we may have to remind ourselves before we finish that some of

the ordinary uses of that word make it too small and meagre, yet we may freely use the name of Conscience to represent that organ which stands between the intelligence of man and the spiritual world, just as the eye stands between the intelligence of man and the world of physical nature, and brings the two together. This is Christ's doctrine in many places. He that uses his conscience, he that means to do what is right out of obedience to God, shall come to the knowledge of God and of his own soul. That is the plain, unfigurative statement of the doctrine which He is constantly reiterating.

And we can see how His doctrine has its root in the nature of things. Conscience is the faculty by which we judge of acts as right or wrong. It follows then, of necessity, that all knowledge of the deeper natures of things by which they become possibly the instruments of righteousness or wickedness, and all knowledge of those deeper and higher parts of the universe which are capable of being known only in their moral characters, must of necessity come in through some such organ or faculty as this, which each man knows that he possesses, and by which he says of characters, "This is good or bad," just as by his eye he says of the branch of a tree, "This is straight or crooked." Is not that clear? A tree is growing outside your window. You, who inside the window are sitting with your face toward the tree, are blind. Some miracle touches you and you get your sight. Instantly that tree leaps into being for you, and by the channel of your opened eyesight pours the recognition of itself through all your intelligence. Just so God, — a Being whose essence is

morality, a Being who is good and who loves or hates all things in the world according as they are good or bad, — God is here before you ; and you have no open conscience. You do not care whether things are right or wrong. You have no perception of the essential difference between right and wrong. You do not feel the dreadfulness of being bad, the beauty of being good. You are not trying to do right. You are not trying to keep from doing wrong. By and by, suddenly or gradually, all that changes. Your shut conscience opens. I will not ask now what makes it open. I will not speak now of the power which the world of God beyond the conscience may have to tempt the conscience into activity. Let us simply watch the fact. You do begin to feel the difference of right and wrong. You begin to try to do right. And then it is, in the pursuance of that effort, that there become gradually impressed upon your intelligence certain things which had found no recognition there before. The spiritual nature of the world ; that all this mass of things and events is fitted for and naturally struggles towards the education of character ; — the spiritual nature of man ; the truth that man is fully satisfied only with what satisfies his soul, only with character, and with an endless chance for that character to grow ; — and God ; the existence, behind all standards and laws, of righteousness, of a perfectly righteous One, from Whom they all proceed and by Whom those who try to follow them are both judged and helped ; — these are the before unseen realities which come pressing into your intelligence, tempting, demanding your recognition when your conscience is once open, when you have

once begun to live in the desire and struggle to do right.

Do you not see then what I mean when I say that the conscience stands between man's power of knowledge and the spiritual world, just as the eye stands between man's power of knowledge and the world of visible nature? It is the opened or unopened window through which flows the glorious knowledge of God and heaven; or outside of which that knowledge waits, as the sun with its glory or the flower with its beauty waits outside the closed eye of a blind or sleeping man.

In both the cases, — in the sight through the eye and the sight through the conscience,—the intelligence which waits within, and does not yet see for itself, is not, of course, shut out from testimony. If a man is thoroughly blind and never sees the sun himself, other men who do see it with their open eyes may, no doubt, come and tell him of it; and in his darkened soul, if he believes them, there grows up some dim, distorted image of the sun which he has never seen. Nay, other senses have some stray messages to tell him of the world, whose full revelation can come only through the opened eye. He feels the sun in its warmth; he smells the rose in its sweetness; he tastes the flavor of the peach. Through these chinks there steal in some tidings of the wondrous world, even while the window through which it can report itself entirely is shut and shuttered. I am impressed by seeing how exactly all this has its correspondent in man's knowledge of the universe of spiritual things. There too, through testimony and through sideway and accidental intimations, as it were, some

knowledge comes even when conscience is shut and no struggle to do right is urging it open to its work. Some man who knows that there is a God, and that the soul is precious and immortal, comes and tells me so. The Bible speaks it with such power that I cannot disbelieve. Nay, the things that are spiritual bring their own sidelong testimonies of themselves. They touch my sense of beauty. They make me feel how good it would be for the world if they were true. I hear their movement in the depths of history. In all these ways they do not leave themselves unwitnessed. These are the ways in which, while I am most unconscientious and least anxious to do right, I may still know that God and spirit are the basis and the issue of the world. Yet still, in spite of all this, there stands the separate glory of the revelation of that day when to me, at last beginning to try to do right, the God whose faint reports have come to me pours in upon my opened soul the glorious conviction of His righteousness and love; and my soul, in which I have half believed, becomes the centre of my life; *becomes* my life, that for which all the other parts of me are made. Then, in the knowledge which pours through my opened conscience, then I know with an assurance which makes all the knowledge that I had before seem but a guess and dim suspicion.

And there is yet another point of resemblance in this comparison of the eye and the conscience, which is striking. When one declares thus, that through the conscience man arrives at the knowledge of unseen things, and conceptions of God and spiritual force and immortality reveal themselves to the intelligence, at once the

suggestion comes from some one who is listening, "Can we be sure of the reality of what thus seems to be made known? How can we be sure that what the conscience sends in to the understanding are not mere creations of its own; things which it thinks exist because it seems to need them; mere forms in which it has been led to clothe with outward and substantial life its own emotions?" Everybody knows such questions. They are thrown up, on every side, to the man who, trying to do right, thinks that through his effort he has found God. They come to him not merely from other men; but his own heart, suspecting its own faiths and hopes, suggests them. But now think how exactly they are the same questions which have always haunted man's whole thought about his vision of the world of nature. How often we are told that none of us can prove that all these things which our eyes see have any real existence outside our sense of sight; that all that we are sure of is certain sensations and impressions in our own brains. Are not then the questions which haunt the conscience the same as those which haunt the eye? And as the eye deals with its questions, so will the conscience always deal with its. A conviction of the reality of what it sees, which is a part of its consciousness that no suspicion can disturb; a use of its knowledge, which brings ever a more and more complete assurance of its trustworthiness, — these are the practical issue of every such question with regard to what the brain sees through the eye; and the same will be the practical issue of every question with regard to what the soul sees through the conscience. At least we may say this, that it would be a very deep confidence indeed if the soul felt as sure

of God as the mind feels of nature. This we feel very deeply in these days, when to so many minds the certainty of nature seems to stand in strong contrast with the uncertainty of God. It is much if we can see that the doubts which are suggested as to the sight of the soul, are but the same with the doubts which we easily overcome when we are dealing with the sight of the body.

Before the parallel, which Christ's illustration suggests, is quite completely apprehended, there is one thing more which we ought to observe; and the observation of it may perhaps touch a difficulty which, I dare say, has suggested itself to some minds while I have been speaking. We have talked as if all that was necessary, in order that the eye of man should see the world of nature, was that the eye should be open; but we know very well that something else is needed. The world of nature may be there in all its beauty, but the openest eye will not see it, if it be not turned that way. The eye, wide open, turned to the blank wall, will not see the mountain and the meadow. "Open your eyes and look here," we say to a child into whose intelligence we want the wonder of nature to be poured. And now, is there anything that corresponds to this second necessity in the case of conscience and its perception of spiritual truth? Surely there is. There is an openness of conscience, a desire and struggle to do right, which is distinctly turned away from God and the world of spiritual things, so that, even if they were there, it would not see them. On the other hand, there is an openness of conscience, a desire and struggle to do right, which is turned towards God and the supernatural,

which is expectant of spiritual revelation ; and to that conscience the spiritual revelation comes. This does not amount to saying that the conscience sees what it wants to see. It is very different from that. Many things the conscience, like the eye, wants to see, and does not see them because they do not exist. But those things which do exist, — though they be the plainest of realities, — no conscience can see which, with the greatest scrupulousness and faithfulness, is turned the other way and expecting revelation from another quarter. Does this explain nothing ? If we can recall a time when we did our duty just as faithfully as we knew how, and found all our duty a drudgery and toil, — a time when conscience was intensely, almost morbidly scrupulous, and would not rest ; and yet, when, for a purpose of duty, we never looked, or tried to look, beyond ourselves and the world in which we lived ; when we tried to be good because we were ashamed of wickedness, or because wickedness we knew would bring us pain ; and if, remembering that all our struggle after goodness in those days brought us no sight of God, we ask ourselves what such a failure of the truly open conscience meant, is there no suggestion of an answer here ? It was the open eye looking down and not up, looking away from God and not to Him. Of course it did not see Him. When the desire to do right began to turn itself and to look up ; when it began to desire to obey and please, and depend upon, whatever highest being in the universe might have anything to do with that soul and its struggles, then the soul knew God. The man who is not trying to do right at all may stand with his blind conscience in the very blaze of God's presence and not

see Him. The man who is trying to do right in selfishness and self-dependence may toil on unenlightened and unaided. The man who is trying to do right Godward, who in all his scrupulousness is devoutly humble and hopeful of things higher than himself, to him, through the openness of his faithful conscience, the vision comes, and he sees God.

My friends, may we not pause a moment here in the midst of our definitions, and let ourselves see what a great truth this is that we have reached? Is it then true that every man carries about with him such a capacity as this? This impulse, the necessity of doing right, of struggling with temptation, which has so often seemed to make life a hard slavery,—see what it really is! It is the opening of the organ through which the whole world of unseen spiritual light and life, all the being and power and love of God, all our own untold future in the regions of immortal growth, may flow in on us and become real and influential in our life. That boy keeping himself true when other boys are tempting him to be false, keeping himself lofty when other boys are tempting him to be base, he is no toiler in a treadmill which he would be well out of if he dared but leave it. He is a climber of the delectable mountains from whose height he shall see heaven and God. And, as he climbs, the promise of the vision is already making his dull eyes strong and fine, so that when the vision comes he shall be able to look right into its deep and glorious heart. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” We praise the hand, the ear, the eye, the brain, for all the knowledge they so wonderfully bring to man. Is there among them all any organ which a

man should honor and glorify and enshrine in such reverent obedience as this, the Conscience; if indeed, through it, God and the unseen world of God may come to him, and his poor humanity grow rich in knowing them?

And so we are led quietly onward to that which Jesus teaches in the text which has given us our starting point for all this long discussion,—“If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light;” the critical importance of a pure, true conscience, of a steady, self-sacrificing struggle to do right Godward. So only can the channel be kept open, through which the knowledge of God and of the spiritual things which belong to Him, can enter into our souls. O, my dear friends, has there been nothing in our experience which has taught us to understand that and to believe it? Is there one of us who cannot remember how, in the hours when he tried to do what was right, the possibility of God, perhaps the certainty of God, grew clear to him, and it seemed to him as if the world opened, and spiritual things bore direct testimony of themselves? And is there one of us who has not the other recollection also, of hours when, in the tumult of indulged passion, or in times when we let ourselves be mean, or when we cared only for ourselves, the whole world of spiritual being, God, heaven, immortality, the power of divine love, the vast, infinite hopes, aye, even the spiritual quality of our own soul itself,—all seemed to fade away from us as the landscape fades away out of the sight of the eye when blindness drops upon it? Still, out of the darkened landscape may come mysterious sounds which fill the soul with fear; and still, out of the hidden world

of spiritual life may come to the sinful and unbelieving soul whispers of dread which make him tremble at the unseen presence of the awful verities which he does not believe in. But all true, healthy, inspiring faith, — all knowledge that can live by love and open into action, grows dim to the soul, dimmer and ever dimmer as it gives itself up to sin.

All this seems to me to throw so much light upon the nature and purpose of Christ's incarnation. Men say: "He came to show us God." Other men say, "No, but He came to save us from our sins." Are not the two really one? It would be easy to ask whether He who showed men God must not save them from their sins. But — what is to our purpose now to ask — must not He who saved men from their sins show men God? The work of Jesus was to make men do right Godward; to make men do right not merely that the world might be more quiet and peaceable and decent, but in order that into souls thus open through their consecrated consciences, the knowledge of that God might enter in whose knowledge is eternal life.

Remember how Jesus always found, in His own obedience to His Father, the secret of His Father's perpetual revelation of Himself to Him. "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him," He said. Those words are the key to it all. He did right Godward. He did always those things that pleased God. In Him was neither the abstract meditation and study of divine things which thinks that the knowledge of them is like the knowledge of the rocks or the stars, something quite independent of moral conditions in the knower; nor, on the other hand,

was there in Him that mere slavery to duty on its lower grounds of economy and prudence, which often paralyzes the conscience and shuts it up as a channel for the higher knowledge. He did right Godward. And if in the wilderness, when the devil was tempting Him, He came for any instant near to faltering, a large part of His strength of resistance must have been in the certainty that if He yielded and sinned, the door would close through which the perpetual knowledge of His Father was forever flowing into Him and filling Him with rich joy and peace.

And what His own life was, Jesus is always trying to make the lives of His disciples be. He is always trying to lead men to do right with hopes and expectations Godward. Men debate again whether Jesus is a human example and teacher, or a divine Power and Redeemer. Surely He is both, and between the two there is no conflict. They are most congruous. Both are parts of that completeness of life by which He would draw the conscience of man upward and make it clear and pure, so that through it the knowledge of God should descend. He taught men holiness by His example and His words; and He declared, in all He was and did, the love of God; and the result of all of it, to John and Mary and Nicodemus and the Magdalen and countless other unnamed disciples, was that they saw God through consciences made scrupulous and holy, and turned to God by the attraction of His manifested love.

I turn to the consummate act of His life, the act in which His life was all summed up, and I see all this in its completeness. I look at Jesus on the cross. I see Him there convicting sin by the sight of its terrific con-

sequence. I see Him also drawing men's souls up, away from the earth and from themselves, up to God, by that amazing sign of how God loved them. And when I turn from looking at the sufferer and look into the faces of those men and women to whom His suffering has brought its power, I see how, in the struggle against sin under the power of the love of God, to which the cross has summoned them, they are knowing God; how, in St. Paul's great words, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, is giving unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened." I see all that in the group around the cross on Calvary; and all that also in the host of Christian souls who have been filled with the knowledge of God, through the sacrifice of Christ, in all the ages since.

I should be more glad than I can say if I could know that I had opened up to any one of you to-day a hope that you might know the things of the spiritual life, the things of God, of which many men are telling you now that they are unknowable by man. That you must not believe. So long as man is able to do right Godward, to keep his conscience pure and true and reverent, set upon doing the best things on the highest grounds, he carries with him an eye through which the everlasting light may, and assuredly will, shine in upon his soul. Such faithfulness and consecration and hope may God give to all, that we may know Him more and more.

VI.

THE MAN OF MACEDONIA.

“And a vision appeared unto Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying : Come over into Macedonia and help us.”—ACTS xvi. 9.

IT was the moment when a new work was opening before the great apostle ; nothing less than the carrying of the gospel into Europe. He had passed through Asia and was sleeping at Troas, with the Mediterranean waters sounding in his ears ; and, visible across them, the islands which were the broken fringes of another continent. We cannot think that this was the first time that it had come into Paul’s mind to think of christianizing Europe. We can well believe that on the past day he had stood and looked westward, and thought of the souls of men as hardly any man since him has known how to think of them, and longed to win for his Master the unknown world that lay beyond the waters. But now, in his sleep, a vision comes, and that completes whatever preparation may have been begun before, and in the morning he is ready to start.

And so it is that before every well-done work the vision comes. We dream before we accomplish. We start with the glorified image of what we are to do shining before our eyes, and it is its splendor that encourages and entices us through all the drudgery of the labor that we meet. The captain dreams out his battle

sleeping in his tent. The quick and subtle-brained inventor has visions of his new wonder of machinery before the first toothed wheel is fitted to its place. You merchants see the great enterprise that is to make your fortune break out of vacancy and develop all its richness to you, as if it were a very inspiration from above. Nay, what is all our boyhood, that comes before our life, and thinks and pictures to itself what life shall be, that fancies and resolves and is impatient, — what is it but just the vision before the work, the dream of Europe coming to many a young life, as it sleeps at Troas, on the margin of the sea? The visions before the work; it is their strength which conquers the difficulties, and lifts men up out of the failures, and redeems the tawdriness or squalidness of the labor that succeeds.

And such preparatory visions, the best of them, take the form and tone of importunate demands. The man hears the world crying out for just this thing which he is going to start to do to-morrow morning. This battle is to save the cause. This new invention is to turn the tide of wealth. This mighty bargain is to make trade another thing. The world must have it. And the long vision of boyhood is in the same strain too. There is something in him, this new boy says, which other men have never had. His new life has its own distinctive difference. He will fill some little unfilled necessary place. He will touch some little untouched spring. The world needs him. It may prove afterwards that the vision was not wholly true. It may seem as if, after all, only another duplicate life was added to a million others, which the world might very well have done without; but still the power of the vision is not soon

exhausted, the mortifying confession is not made at once, and before it wholly fades away the vision gives a power and momentum to the life which the life never wholly loses.

And indeed we well may doubt whether the vision was a false one, even when the man himself, in his colder and less hopeful years, comes to think and say that it was. We well may doubt whether, with the infinite difference of personal life and character which God sends into the world, every true and earnest man has not some work that he alone can do, some place that he alone can fill; whether there is not somewhere a demand that he alone can satisfy; whether the world does not need him, is not calling to him, "Come and help us," as he used to hear it in the vision that was shown to him upon the sea-shore.

So much we say of preparatory visions in general. I want to look with you at this vision of Paul's, and see how far we can understand its meaning, and how much we can learn from it. A Macedonian comes before the apostle of Christ, and asks him for the gospel. The messenger is the representative, not of Macedonia only, but of all Europe. Macedonia is only the nearest country into which the traveller from Asia must cross first. There he stands in his strange dress, with his strange western look, with his strange gestures, before the waking or the sleeping Paul, begging in a strange language, which only the pentecostal power of spiritual appreciative sympathy can understand, — "Come over and help us." But what was this Macedonia and this Europe which he represented? Did it want the gospel? Had it sent him out because it was restless and craving and

uneasy, and could not be satisfied until it heard the truth about Jesus Christ, which Paul of Tarsus had to tell? Nothing of that kind whatsoever. Europe was going on perfectly contented in its heathenism. Its millions knew of nothing that was wanting to their happiness. They were full of their business and their pleasures, scheming for little self-advancements, taking care of their families, living in their tastes or their passions; a few questioning with themselves deep problems of perplexed philosophy, a few hanging votive wreaths on the cold altars of marble gods and goddesses, some looking upward and some downward and some inward for their life; but none looking eastward to where the apostle was sleeping, or, farther east, beyond him, to where the new sun of the new religion was making the dark sky bright with promise on that silent night. So far as we can know there was not one man in Macedonia who wanted Paul. When he went over there the next day, he found what? — a few bigoted Jews, some crazy soothsayers and witches, multitudes of indifferent heathen, a few open-hearted men and women who heard and believed what he had to tell them, but not one who had believed before, or wanted to believe, — not one who met him at the ship and said, “Come, we have waited for you; we sent for you; we want your help.” But what then means the man from Macedonia? If he was not the messenger of the Macedonians, who was he? Who sent him? Ah! there is just the key to it. God sent him. Not the Macedonians themselves. They did not want the gospel. God sent him, because He saw that they needed the gospel. The mysterious man was an utterance not of the conscious want but of the un-

conscious need of those poor people. A heart and being of them, deeper and more essential than they knew themselves, took shape in some strange method by the power of God, and came and stood before the sleeping minister and said, "Come over and help us." The "man of Macedonia" was the very heart and essence of Macedonia, the profoundest capacities of truth and goodness and faith and salvation which Macedonia itself knew nothing of, but which were its real self. These were what took form and pleaded for satisfaction. It is not easy to state it; but look at Europe as it has been since, see the new life which has come forth, the profound spirituality, the earnest faith, the thoughtful devotion, the active unselfishness which has been the Europe of succeeding days; and then we may say that this, and more than this, all that is yet to come, was what God saw lying hidden and hampered, and set free to go and beg for help and release, from the disciple who held the key which has unlocked the fetters.

And is not this a very noble and a very true idea. It is the unsatisfied soul, the deep need, all the more needy because the outside life, perfectly satisfied with itself, does not know that it is needy all the time, — it is this that God hears pleading. This soul is the true Macedonia. And so this, as the representative Macedonian, the man of Macedonia, brings the appeal. How noble and touching is the picture which this gives us of God. The unconscious needs of the world are all appeals and cries to Him. He does not wait to hear the voice of conscious want. The mere vacancy is a begging after fulness; the mere poverty is a supplication for wealth; the mere darkness cries for light. Think

then a moment of God's infinite view of the capacities of His universe, and consider what a great cry must be forever going up into His ears to which His soul longs and endeavors to respond. Wherever any man is capable of being better or wiser or purer than he is, God hears the soul of that man crying out after the purity and wisdom and goodness which is its right, and of which it is being defrauded by the angry passions or the stubborn will. When you shut out any light or truth from your inner self, by the shutters of avarice or indolence which your outer, superficial, worldly self so easily slips up, — that inner self, robbed, starved, darkened, not conscious of its want, hidden away there under the hard surface of your worldliness, has yet a voice which God can hear, accusing before Him your own cruelty to yourself. What a strong piteous wail of dissatisfaction must He hear from this world which seems so satisfied with itself. Wherever a nation is sunk in slavery or barbarism it cannot be so perfectly contented with its chains but that He hears the soul of it crying out after liberty and civilization. Wherever a man or a body of men is given to bigotry and prejudice, the love of darkness cannot be so complete but that He hears the human heart begging for the light that it was made for. Wherever lust is ruling, He hears the appeal of a hidden, outraged purity somewhere under the foul outside, and sends to it His help. Alas for us if God helped us only when we knew we needed Him and went to Him with full self-conscious wants! Alas for us if every need which we know not, had not a voice for Him and did not call Him to us! Did the world want the Savior? Was it not into a blindness so dark that

it did not know that it was blind, into a wickedness so wicked that it was not looking for a Savior, that the Savior came? And when we look back can we say that we wanted the Lord who has taken us into His service and made us His children? Tell me, O Christian, was it a conscious want, — was it not the cry of a silent need, that brought the Master to your side at first and so drew you to His? “He first loved us!” Our hope is in the ear which God has for simple need; so that mere emptiness cries out to Him for filling, mere poverty for wealth.

I cannot help turning aside a moment here just to bid you think what the world would be if men were like God in this respect. Suppose that we, all of us, heard every kind of need crying to us with an appeal which we could not resist. Out of every suffering and constraint and wrong, suppose there came to us, as out of Macedonia there came to Paul, a ghost, a vision, presenting at once to us the fact of need and the possibility of what the needy man might be if the need were satisfied and the chain broken. Suppose such visions came and stood around us crying out “Help us.” You go through some wretched street and not a beggar touches your robe or looks up in your face, but the bare, dreadful presence of poverty cries out of every tumbling shanty and every ragged pretence of dress. You go among the ignorant, and out from under their contented ignorance their hidden power of knowledge utters itself and says “O teach us.” It is not enough for you that the oppressed are satisfied with their oppression. That only makes you the more eager to feed into consciousness and strength that hunger after liberty which they

are too degraded to feel. You see a sick man contented with dogged acquiescence and submission, and you want to show him the possibility and to lead him to the realization, of a resignation and delight in suffering which he never dreams of now. Mere pain is itself a cry for sympathy ; mere darkness an appeal for light.

“ Ah,” do you say, “ that must be a most uncomfortable way of living. The world forever clamoring for help ! Those things are not my mission, not my work. If the world does not know its needs I will not tell it. Let it rest content. That is best for it ” ? But there have been, and, thank God, there are, men of a better stuff than you ; men who cannot know of a need in all the world, from the need of a child fallen in the street, whose tears are to be wiped away, to the need of a nation lying in sin, whose wickedness must be rebuked to its face at the cost of the rebuker’s life ; there are men who cannot know of a need in all the world without its taking the shape of a personal appeal to them. They must go and do this thing. There are such men who seem to have a sort of magnetic attraction for all wrongs and pains. All grievances and woes fly to them to be righted and consoled. They attract need. They who cannot sleep at Troas but the soul of Macedonia finds them out and comes across and begs them “ Come and help us.” We all must be thankful to know that there are such men among us, however little we may feel that we are such men ourselves ; nay, however little we may want to be such men.

But let us come a little nearer to the truth that we are studying. It seems to me that all which we have said about the man of Macedonia includes the real state of the case with reference to the essential need of the human soul for the Gospel. We often hear of the great cry of human nature for the truth of Christ, man craving the Savior. What does it mean? The world moves on and every face looks satisfied. Eating and drinking and working and studying, loving and hating, struggling and enjoying, — those things seem to be sufficient for men's wants. There is no discontent that men will tell you of. They are not conscious of a need. I stop you, the most careless hearer in the church to-night, as you go out, and say "Are you satisfied?" and honestly you answer "Yes! My business and my family, they are enough for me"; "Do you feel any need of Christ?" and honestly you answer "No! Sometimes I fear that it will go ill with me by and by, if I do not seek Him, but at present I do not want Him; I do not see how I should be happier if I had Him here." That is about the honest answer which your heart would make. But what then? Just as below the actual Macedonia which did not care for Paul nor want him, there was another possible, ideal Macedonia which God saw and called forth and sent in a visionary form to beg the help it could not do without, so to that civil flippant answerer of my question at the church door I could say: "Below this outer self of yours which is satisfied with family and business, there is another self which you know nothing of but which God sees, which He values as your truest and deepest self, which to His sight is a real person pleading so piteously for help that

He has not been able to resist its pleading, but has sent His ministers, has sent His Bible, — nay, has come Himself to satisfy it with that spiritual aid it cannot do without.” I can imagine a look of perplexity and wonder, a turning back, an inward search for this inner self, a strange, bewildered doubt whether it exists at all.

And yet, this coming forth of inner selves with their demands, is it not the one method of all progress? What does it mean when a slave, long satisfied with being fed and housed and clothed, some day comes to the knowledge that he was meant to be free, and can rest satisfied as a slave no longer? What is it when the savage’s inner nature is touched by the ambition of knowledge, and he cannot rest until he grows to be a scholar? What is it when a hard, selfish man’s crust is broken, and a sensitive, tender soul uncovered, which makes life a wretched thing to him from that moment, unless he has somebody besides himself to love and help and cherish? These men would not believe an hour before that such appetites and faculties were in them; but God knew them, and heard them all the time; and long before the men dreamed of it themselves, the slave was crying out to Him for freedom, and the savage for culture, and the tyrant for love. Now is it strange that, also unknown to you, there should be other appetites and faculties in you which need a satisfaction? The Bible says there are. Experience says there are. Let us see if we can find some of them.

1. The first need is a God to love and worship. Anybody who looks wisely back into history sees, I think, regarding man’s need of a God to love and worship, just what I have stated to be true. Not that man was

always seeking God, or always miserable, when he did not find Him. One sees multitudes of men, and sometimes whole periods, or whole countries, that seem to have no sense of want whatever, to have settled down into the purest materialism and the most utter self-content. But he sees also indications everywhere that the need was present, even where the want was not felt. He sees the idea of God keeping a sort of persistent foothold in the human heart, which proves to him that it belongs there ; that, whether the heart wants it or not, it and the heart are mates, made for one another, and so tending towards each other by a certain essential gravitation, whatever accidental causes may have tried to produce an estrangement between them. Take one such indication only, a very striking one, I think. There is in man a certain power of veneration, of awe, of adoration. This has always showed itself. In all sorts of men, in all sorts of places, it has broken out ; and men have tried to adapt it to all sorts of objects, to satisfy it with all sorts of food. The idolater has offered to his faculty of reverence his wooden idol, and said "There, worship that ;" the philosopher has offered it his abstract truth, and said "Venerate that ;" the philanthropist has offered it his ideal humanity, and said "Worship that ;" and one result has always followed. Everywhere where nothing higher than the idol, the theory, or the humanity was offered for the reverence to fasten on, everywhere where it was offered no one supreme causal God, not merely the object of reverence has ceased to be revered, but the very power of reverence itself has been dissipated and lost ; and idolatry, philosophy, philanthropy alike have grown

irreverent, and man has lost and often come to despise that faculty of venerating and submissive awe, the awe of love, for which he found no use. If this be true, that there is a faculty in man which dies out on any other food, and thrives only on the personal Deity, then have we not exactly what I tried to describe, a need of which one may be utterly unconscious, and yet which is no less a need, crying, though the man does not hear it, for supply ?

This is precisely the ground which I would take with any thoughtful man who told me seriously and without flippancy that he felt no want of God, that he felt no lack in the absence of relations between his life and that of a supreme infinite Father. "Yes," I would say, "but there is in you a power of loving awe which needs infinite perfection and mercy to call it out and satisfy it. There is an affection which you cannot exercise towards any imperfect being. It is that mixture of admiration and reverence and fear and love, which we call worship. Now ask yourself, Are you not losing the power of worship ? Is it not dying for want of an object ? Are you not conscious that a power of the soul, which other men use, which you used once perhaps, is going from you ? Are you not substituting critical, carefully limited, philosophical, partial approbations of imperfect men and things, for that absolute, unhindered, whole-souled outpouring of worship which nothing but the perfect can demand or justify ? If this power is not utterly to die within you, do you not need God ? If you are not to lose that highest reach of love and fear where, uniting, they make worship, must you not have God ? Lo ! before this expiring faculty the personal

God comes and stands, and it lifts up its dying hands to reach after Him ; it opens its dying eyes to look upon Him ; as when a man is perishing of starvation, the sight of bread summons him back to life. He need not die, but live, for here is his own life-food come to him."

Woe to the man who loses the faculty of worship, the faculty of honoring and loving and fearing not merely something better than himself, but something which is the absolute best, the perfect good, — his God ! The life is gone out of his life when this is gone. There is a cloud upon his thought, a palsy on his action, a chill upon his love. Because you must worship, therefore you must have God.

2. But more than this. Every man needs not merely a God to worship, but also, taking the fact which meets us everywhere of an estrangement by sin between mankind and God, every man needs some power to turn him and bring him back ; some reconciliation, some Reconciler, some Savior for his soul. Again I say he may not know his need, but none the less the need is there. But, if a man has reached the first want and really is desiring God, then I think he generally does know, or in some vague way suspect, this second want, and does desire reconciliation. It is so natural ! Two of you, who have been friends, have quarrelled. Your very quarrel, it may be, has brought out to each of you how much you need each other. You never knew your friend was so necessary to your comfort and your happiness. You cannot do without him. Then at once, "How shall I get to him ?" becomes your question. O the awkwardness and difficulty, the stumbling and shuffling and blundering of such efforts at return. Men are afraid

and ashamed to try. They do not know how they will be received. They cannot give up their old pride. Rebellious tempers and bad habits block the way. I doubt not, so frequent are they, that there are people here to-night who are stumbling about in some such bog of unsettled quarrel, longing to get back to some friend whom they value more in their disagreement than even in the old days of unbroken peace. Their whole soul is hungering for reconciliation. The misery of their separation is that each at heart desires what neither has the frankness and the courage to attain.

Now under all outward rebellion and wickedness, there is in every man who ought to be a friend of God, and that means every man whom God has made, a need of reconciliation. To get back to God, that is the struggle. The soul is Godlike and seeks its own. It wants its Father. There is an orphanage, a homesickness of the heart which has gone up into the ear of God, and called the Savior, the Reconciler, to meet it by His wondrous life and death. I, for my part, love to see in every restlessness of man's moral life everywhere, whatever forms it takes, the struggles of this imprisoned desire. The reason may be rebellious, and vehemently cast aside the whole story of the New Testament, but the soul is never wholly at its rest away from God. Does this not put it most impressively before us? Is it not something at least to startle us and make us think, if we come to know that the very God of heaven saw a want, a struggle, a longing of our souls after Himself, which was too deep, too obscure, too clouded over with other interests for even us to see ourselves, and came to meet that want with the wonderful mani-

festation of the incarnation, the atonement? We hear of the marvellous power of the Gospel, and we come to doubt it when we see the multitudes of unsaved men. But it is true. The Gospel is powerful, omnipotent. A truth like this, thoroughly believed, and taken in, must melt the hardest heart and break down the most stubborn will. It does not save men, simply because it is not taken in, not believed. The Gospel is powerless, just as the medicine that you keep corked in its vial on the shelf is powerless. If you will not take it, what matters it what marvellous drugs have lent their subtle virtues to it? Believe and thou art saved. Understand and know, and thoroughly take home into your affection and your will, the certain truth that Christ saw your need of Him when you did not know it yourself, and came to help you at a cost past all calculation, — really believe this and you must be a new man and be saved.

3. I should like to point out another of the needs of man which God has heard appealing to Him and has satisfied completely. I know that I must speak about it very briefly. It is the need of spiritual guidance; and it is a need whose utterance not God's ear alone can hear. Every man hears it in the race at large, and hears it in his brethren, however deaf he may be to it in himself. I think there never was a materialist so complete that he did not realize that the great mass of men were not materialists, but believed in spiritual forces and longed for spiritual companies. He might think the spiritual tendency the wildest of delusions, but he could not doubt its prevalence. How could he? Here is the whole earth full of it. Language is all shaped upon it.

Thought is all saturated with it. In the most imposing and the most vulgar methods, by solemn oracles and rocking tables, men have been always trying to put themselves into communication with the spiritual world and to get counsel and help from within the veil. And if we hear the cry from one another, how much more God hears it. Do you think, poor stumbler, that God did not know it when you found no man to tell you what you ought to do in a perplexity which, as it rose around you, seemed, as it was, unlike any bewilderment that had ever puzzled any man before? Do you think, poor sufferer, that God did not hear it when in your sickness and pain men came about you with their kindness, fed you with delicacies, and spread soft cushions under the tortured body, and all the time the mind diseased, feeling so bitterly that these tender cares for the body's comfort did not begin to touch its spiritual pain, lay moaning and wailing out its hopeless woe? Do you think now, my brother, when you have got a hard duty to do, a hard temptation to resist; when you have felt all about you for strength, called in prudence and custom and respectability and interest to keep you straight, and found them all fail because, by their very nature, they have no spiritual strength to give; when now you stand just ready to give way and fall, ready to go to-morrow morning and do the wrong thing that you have struggled against so long, — do you think that God does not know it all, and does not hear the poor frightened soul's cry for help against the outrage that is threatening her, and has not prepared a way of aid? The power of the Holy Spirit! — an everlasting spiritual presence among men. What but that is the thing we

want? That is what the old oracles were dreaming of, what the modern spiritualists to-night are fumbling after. The power of the Holy Ghost by which every man who is in doubt may know what is right, every man whose soul is sick may be made spiritually whole, every weak man may be made a strong man,—that is God's one sufficient answer to the endless appeal of man's spiritual life; that is God's one great response to the unconscious need of spiritual guidance, which he hears crying out of the deep heart of every man.

I hope that I have made clear to you what I mean. I would that we might understand ourselves, see what we might be; nay, see what we are. While you are living a worldly and a wicked life, letting all sacred things go, caring for no duty, serving no God, there is another self, your possibility, the thing that you might be, the thing that God gave you a chance to be; and that self, wronged and trampled on by your recklessness, escapes and flies to God with its appeal:—"O, come and help me. I am dying. I am dying. Give me Thyself for Father. Give me Thy Son for Savior. Give me Thy Spirit for my guide." So your soul pleads before God; pleads with a pathos all the more piteous in his ears, because you do not hear the plea yourself; pleads with such sacred prevalence that the great merciful Heart yields and gives all that the dumb appeal has asked.

What does it mean? Here is the Gospel in its fullness. Here is God for you to worship. Here is Christ to save you. Here is the Comforter. Have you asked for them, my poor careless brother, that here they stand

with such profusion of blessing, waiting to help you? "Ah, no," you say, "I never asked." Suppose, when Paul landed in Macedonia, he had turned to the careless group who watched him as he stepped ashore, and said, "Here am I; you sent for me. Here am I with the truth, the Christ you need," — what must their answer have been? "O, no, you are mistaken; we never sent; we do not know you; we do not want you!" Yet they had sent. Their needs had stood and begged him to come over, out of the lips of that mysterious man of Macedonia. And when they came to know this, they must have found all the more precious the preciousness of a gospel which had come to them in answer to a need they did not know themselves.

And so your needs have stood, they are standing now before God. They have moved Him to deep pity and care for you. And He has sent the supply for them before you knew you wanted it. And here it is, — a God to worship, a Savior to believe in, a Comforter to rest upon. O, if you ever do come, as I would to God that you might come to-night, to take this mercy, and let your thirsty soul drink of this water of life! then you will feel most deeply the goodness which provided for you before you even knew that you needed any such provision; then you will understand those words of Paul: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Till that time comes, what can God do but stand and call you and warn you and beg you to know yourself. "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind

and naked, I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me."

VII.

THE SYMMETRY OF LIFE.

“The Length and the Breadth and the Height of it are equal.” —
REV. xxi. 16.

ST. JOHN in his great vision sees the mystic city, “the holy Jerusalem,” descending out of heaven from God. It is the picture of glorified humanity, of humanity as it shall be when it is brought to its completeness by being thoroughly filled with God. And one of the glories of the city which he saw was its symmetry. Our cities, our developments and presentations of human life, are partial and one-sided. This city out of heaven was symmetrical. In all its three dimensions it was complete. Neither was sacrificed to the other. “The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.”

No man can say what mysteries of the yet unopened future are hidden in the picture of the mystic city; but if that city represents, as I have said, the glorified humanity, then there is much of it that we can understand already. It declares that the perfect life of man will be perfect on every side. One token of its perfectness will be its symmetry. In each of its three dimensions it will be complete.

So much of the noblest life which the world has seen dissatisfies us with its partialness; so many of the

greatest men we see are great only upon certain sides, and have their other sides all shrunk, flat, and small, that it may be well for us to dwell upon the picture, which these words suggest, of a humanity rich and full and strong all round, complete on every side, the perfect cube of human life which comes down out of heaven from God.

As I speak I should like to keep before my mind and before yours, that picture which I think is the most interesting that the world has to show, the picture of a young man, brave and strong and generous, just starting out into life, and meaning with all his might to be the very best and most perfect man he can ; meaning to make life the fullest and most genuine success. Let us see him before us as I speak. We shall see how natural his dangers and temptations are ; we shall see how his very strength tends to partialness ; we shall see how every power that is in him will grow doubly strong if he can buttress and steady it with strength upon the other sides, if in his growing character he can attain the symmetry and completeness of the new Jerusalem.

There are, then, three directions or dimensions of human life to which we may fitly give these three names, Length and Breadth and Height. The Length of a life, in this meaning of it, is, of course, not its duration. It is rather the reaching on and out of a man, in the line of activity and thought and self-development, which is indicated and prophesied by the character which is natural within him, by the special ambitions which spring up out of his special powers. It is the push of a life forward to its own personal ends and ambitions. The Breadth of a life, on the other hand, is

its outreach laterally, if we may say so. It is the constantly diffusive tendency which is always drawing a man outward into sympathy with other men. And the Height of a life is its reach upward towards God ; its sense of childhood ; its consciousness of the Divine Life over it with which it tries to live in love, communion, and obedience. These are the three dimensions of a life, — its length and breadth and height, — without the due development of all of which no life becomes complete.

Think first about the Length of life in this understanding of the word. Here is a man who, as he comes to self-consciousness, recognizes in himself a certain nature. He cannot be mistaken. Other men have their special powers and dispositions. As this young man studies himself he finds that he has his. That nature which he has discovered in himself decides for him his career. He says to himself " Whatever I am to do in the world must be done in this direction." It is a fascinating discovery. It is an ever-memorable time for a man when he first makes it. It is almost as if a star woke to some subtle knowledge of itself, and felt within its shining frame the forces which decided what its orbit was to be. Because it is the star it is, that track through space must be its track. Out on that track it looks ; along that line which sweeps through the great host of stars it sends out all its hopes ; and all the rest of space is merely the field through which that track is flung ; all the great host of stars is but the audience which wait to hear it as it goes singing on its way. So starts the young life which has come to self-discovery and found out what it is to do by finding out

what it is. It starts to do that destined thing ; to run out that appointed course. Nay, the man when he arrives at this self-discovery finds that his nature has not waited for him to recognize himself. What he is, even before he knows it, has decided what he does. It may be late in life before he learns to say of himself "This is what I am." But then he looks back and discerns that, even without his knowing himself enough to have found it out, his life has run out in a line which had the promise and potency of its direction in the nature which his birth and education gave him. But if he does know it, the course is yet more definite and clear. Every act that he does is a new section of that line which runs between his nature and his appointed work. Just in proportion to the definiteness with which he has measured and understood himself, is the sharpness of that line which every thought and act and word is projecting a little farther, through the host of human lives, towards the purpose of his living, towards the thing which he believes that he is set into the world to do.

Your own experience will tell you what I mean. Have you known any young man who early found out what his nature was ; found out, for instance, that he had a legal mind and character ? He said to himself "I am made to be a lawyer." Instantly with that discovery it was as if two points stood out clearly to him ; he with his legal nature here ; the full, completed lawyer's work and fame afar off there. Two unconnected points they seemed at first, which simply beckoned to each other across the great distance, and knew that, however unconnected they might be, they had to do with one another and must ultimately meet. Then

that man's life became one long extension of his nature and his powers and his will along a line which should at last attain that distant goal. All his self-culture strove that way. He read no book, he sought no friend, he gave himself no recreation, which was not somehow going to help him to his end and make him a better lawyer. Through the confusion and whirl of human lives, his life ran in one sharp, narrow line, almost as straight and clear as the railroad track across a continent, from what he knew he was, to what he meant to be and do. As the railroad track sweeps through the towns which string themselves along it, climbs mountains and plunges into valleys, hides itself in forests and flashes out again into broad plains and along the sunny sides of happy lakes, and evidently cares nothing for them all except as they just give it ground on which to roll out its length towards its end by the shore of the Pacific, — so this man's life pierces right on through all the tempting and perplexing complications of our human living, and will not rest until it has attained the mastery of legal power. That clear, straight line of its unswerving intention, that struggle and push right onward to the end, — that is the length of this man's life.

And if you recognize this, as of course you do, then you know also how necessary an element or dimension of any useful and successful life this is. To have an end and seek it eagerly, no man does anything in the world without that. If we let our thoughts leap at once to the summit of human living, and think of Jesus, we see it in perfection. The onward reach, the struggle to an apprehended purpose, the straight clear line right

from His own self-knowledge to His work, was perfect in the Lord. "For this cause was I born," He cried. His life pierced like an arrow through the cloud of aimless lives, never for a moment losing its direction, hurrying on with a haste and assurance which were divine. And this which He illustrates perfectly is, in our own fashion, one of the favorite thoughts of our own time. No man finds less tolerance to-day than the aimless man, the man whose life lies and swings like a pool, instead of flowing straight onward like a river. We revel in the making of specialists. Often it seems as if the more narrow and straight we could make the line which runs between the nature and its work, the more beautiful we thought it. We make our boys choose their electives when they go to college, decide at once on what they mean to do, and pour all the stream of knowledge down the sluiceway which leads to that one wheel. Perhaps we overdo it, but no thinking man dreams of saying that the thing itself is wrong. This movement of a man's whole life along some clearly apprehended line of self-development and self-accomplishment, this reaching of a life out forward to its own best attainment, no man can live as a man ought to live without it. The men who have no purpose, the men in whose life this first dimension of length is wanting or is very weak, are good for nothing. They lie in the world like mere pulpy masses, giving it no strength or interest or character.

Set yourself earnestly to see what you were made to do, and then set yourself earnestly to do it. That is the first thing that we want to say to our young man in the building of whose life we feel an interest. As

we say it we feel almost a hesitation, it may be, because the exhortation sounds so selfish. Self-study and self-culture, surely that makes a very selfish life. Indeed it does. But he has thought very little who has not discovered two things concerning selfishness. First, that there is a lofty selfishness, a high care for our own culture, which is a duty, and not a fault. And secondly, that he who in this highest way cares for himself and seeks for himself his own best good, must, whether he thinks of doing it or not, help other men's development as well as his own. It is only the line which is seeking something that is low, that can pierce through the live mass of men's lives and interests and be as wholly independent of them all as I pictured just now. Even the railroad track, hurrying to the Pacific, must leave something of civilizing influence on the prairies which it crosses. In the highest and purest sense of the word there certainly was selfishness in Jesus. No man might tempt or force Him from the resolute determination to unfold His appointed life and be His perfect self. The world is right when it follows its blind instinct and stands, with some kind of gratitude though not a gratitude of the most loving sort, beside the grave of some man who in life has been loftily possessed with the passion for self-culture, and has never thought of benefiting the world ; for if his passion for self-culture has really been of the most lofty kind, the world must be the better for it.

Therefore we may freely say to any young man, Find your purpose and fling your life out to it ; and the loftier your purpose is, the more sure you will be to make the world richer with every enrichment of yourself. And

this, you see, comes to the same thing as saying that this first dimension of life, which we call Length, the more loftily it is sought, has always a tendency to produce the second dimension of life, which we called Breadth. Of that second dimension let us go on now to speak. I have ventured to call this quality of breadth in a man's life its outreach laterally. When that tendency of which I have just been talking, the tendency of a man's career, the more loftily it is pursued, to bring him into sympathy and relationship with other men, — when that tendency, I say, is consciously and deliberately acknowledged, and a man comes to value his own personal career because of the way in which it relates him to his brethren and the help which it permits him to offer them, then his life has distinctly begun to open in this new direction, and to its length it has added breadth. There are men enough with whom no such opening seems to take place. You know them well ; men eager, earnest, and intense, reaching forward toward their prize, living straight onward in their clearly apprehended line of life ; but to all appearance, so far as you and I can see, living exactly as they would live if they were the only living beings on the surface of the earth, or as if all the other beings with whom they came in contact were only like the wooden rounds upon the ladder by which they climbed to their own personal ambition. Such men you have all known ; men who could not conceive of any other life as valuable, happy, or respectable, except their own ; men “ wrapped up in themselves,” as we say, — an envelope as thick as leather, through which no pressure of any other life or character could reach them. And the one feeling that you have

about such perfect specialists is the wonder that so great intelligence can be compressed into such narrowness. They are as bright and sharp as needles, and as hard and narrow.

But when a man has length and breadth of life together, we feel at once how the two help each other. Length without breadth is hard and narrow. Breadth without length,—sympathy with others in a man who has no intense and clear direction for himself,—is soft and weak. You see this in the instinctive and strong dislike which all men have for the professional reformer and philanthropist. The world dislikes a man who, with no definite occupation of his own, not trying to be anything particular himself, devotes himself to telling other people what they ought to be. It may allow his good intentions, but it will not feel his influence. The man whom the world delights to feel is the man who has evidently conceived some strong and distinct purpose for himself, from which he will allow nothing to turn his feet aside, who means to be something with all his soul; and yet who finds, in his own earnest effort to fill out his own career, the interpretation of the careers of other men; and also finds, in sympathy with other men, the transfiguration and sustainment of his own appointed struggle.

Indeed these are the two ways in which the relation between the length and breadth of a man's life, between his energy in his own career and his sympathy with the careers of other men, comes out and shows itself. First, the man's own career becomes to him the interpretation of the careers of other men; and secondly, by his sympathy with other men, his own life displays to him its

best capacity. The first of these is very beautiful to watch. Imagine the reformer, whom I spoke of, suddenly called to forget the work of helping other men, and to plunge into some work of his own. With what surprise at his own increase of wisdom he would come back, by and by, to the help of his brethren! What far wiser and more reverent hands he would lay upon their lives; with what tones of deepened understanding he would speak to their needs and sins and temptations, after he had himself tried to live a true life of his own! This is the reason, I suppose, why, in the Bible, the ministry of angels to mankind, while it is clearly intimated, is made so little of. It is because, however real it is, it could not be brought very close to the intelligence and gratitude of men, so long as the personal lives of the angels are hidden in mystery. Only he who lives a life of his own can help the lives of other men. Surely there is here one of the simplest and strongest views which a man possibly can take of his own life. "Let me live," he may say, "as fully as I can, in order that in this life of mine I may learn what life really is, and so be fit to understand and help the lives of men about me. Let me make my own career as vivid and successful as possible, that in it I may get at the secret of life, which, when I have once found it, will surely be the key to other lives besides my own." He who should talk and think so of his own career would evidently have gone far towards solving the problem of the apparent incompatibility between intense devotion to one's own pursuit and cordial sympathy with other men. He would find, in the very heart of his own work, the clew to the works of other men. He

would be no mere specialist, and yet he would toil hardest of all men in the special task in which he was engaged. But his task would be always glorified and kept from narrowness by his perpetual demand upon it, that it should give him such a broad understanding of human life in general as should make him fit to read and touch and help all other kinds of life.

And if thus the special life does much to make the sympathy with other lives intelligent and strong, the debt is yet not wholly on one side. There is a wonderful power in sympathy to open and display the hidden richness of a man's own seemingly narrow life. You think that God has been training you in one sort of discipline, but when you let yourself go out in sympathy with other men whose disciplines have been completely different from your own, you find that in your discipline the power of theirs was hidden. This is the power which sympathy has to multiply life and make out of one experience the substance and value of a hundred. The well man sympathizes with the sick man, and thereby exchanges, as it were, some of the superfluous riches of his health into the other coin of sickness, gets something of the culture which would have come to him if he had himself been sick. The sick man, in return, gets something, even in all his pain and weakness, of the discipline of health and strength. The same is true about the sympathy of the rich with the poor, of the believer with the doubter, of the hopeful with the despondent, of the liberal with the bigoted; aye, even of the saint with the sinner. The holiest soul, pitying the brother-soul which has fallen into vilest vice, gains, while it keeps its own purity unsoiled, something of the

sight of that other side of God, the side where justice and forgiveness blend in the opal mystery of grace, which it would seem as if only the soul that looked up out of the depths of guilt could see. All this is perfect in the vicariousness of Christ; and what was perfect there, is echoed imperfectly in the way in which every man's special life becomes enlarged and multiplied as he looks abroad from it in sympathy with other men.

So much I say about the length and breadth of life. One other dimension still remains. The length and breadth and height of it are equal. The Height of life is its reach upward toward something distinctly greater than humanity. Evidently all that I have yet described, all the length and breadth of life, might exist, and yet man be a creature wholly of the earth. He might move on straight forward in his own career. He might even enter into living sympathy with his brother-men; and yet never look up, never seem to have anything to do with anything above this flat and level plain of human life. A world without a sky! How near any one man's life here and there may come to that, I dare not undertake to say. Some men will earnestly insist that that is just their life; that there is no divine appetite, no reaching Godward in them anywhere. But to a man who thoroughly believes in God, I think that it will always seem that such a life, however any man may think that he is living it, must always be impossible for every man. There cannot be a God and yet any one of His creatures live exactly and entirely as if there was no God.

The reaching of mankind towards God! Evidently, in order that that may become a true dimension of a

man's life, it must not be a special action. It must be something which pervades all that he is and does. It must not be a solitary column set on one holy spot of the nature. It must be a movement of the whole nature upward. Here has been one of the great hinderances of the power of religion in the world. Religion has been treated as if it were a special exercise of a special power, not as if it were the possible loftiness of everything that a man could think or be or do. The result has been that certain men and certain parts of men have stood forth as distinctively religious, and that the possible religiousness of all life has been but very imperfectly felt and acknowledged. This has made religion weak. Man's strongest powers, man's intensest passions, have been involved in the working out of his career, and in the development of his relations with his fellow-men. What has been left over for religion has been the weakest part of him, his sentiments and fears; and so religion, very often, has come to seem a thing of mystic moods and frightened superstitions. This picture from the city of the Revelation seems to me to make the matter very clear. The height of life, its reach toward God, must be coextensive with, must be part of the one same symmetrical whole with, the length of life or its reach towards its personal ambition, and the breadth of life or its reach towards the sympathy of brother-lives. It is when a man begins to know the ambition of his life not simply as the choice of his own will but as the wise assignment of God's love; and to know his relations to his brethren not simply as the result of his own impulsive affections but as the seeking of his soul for these souls because they all belong

to the great Father-soul; it is then that life for that man begins to lift itself all over and to grow towards completion upward through all its length and breadth. That is a noble time, a bewildering and exalting time in any of our lives, when into everything that we are doing enters the spirit of God, and thenceforth moving ever up toward the God to whom it belongs, that Spirit, dwelling in our life, carries our life up with it; not separating our life from the earth, but making every part of it while it still keeps its hold on earth, soar up and have to do with heaven; so completing life in its height, by making it divine.

To any man in whom that uplifting of life has genuinely begun, all life without it must seem very flat and poor. My dear friends, this is Advent Sunday. Once more wrought into all our service, pressed into all our hearts, has come to-day the rich, wonderful truth that God once came into our world. And that one coming of God we know gets its great value from being the type and promise of the truth that God is always coming. And for God to come into the world means for Him to come into our lives. On Advent Sunday, then, let us get close hold of this truth. These lives of ours, hurrying on in their ambitions, spreading out in their loves, they are capable of being filled with God, possessed by His love, eager after His communion; and, if they can be, if they are, then, without losing their eager pursuit of their appointed task, without losing their cordial reaching after the lives around them, they shall be quietly, steadily, nobly lifted into something of the peace and dignity of the God whom they aspire to. The fret and restlessness shall fade out of their ambi-

tions ; the jealousy shall disappear out of their loves. Love for themselves and love for their brethren, robed and enfolded into the love for God, shall be purified and cleared of all meanness, shall be filled with a strength as calm as it is strong. O, my dear friends, there is room for that new dimension over the lives that all of you are living. Above the head of the most earthly of you heaven is open. You may aspire into it and complete yourself upward if you will. All that you are now imperfectly, as an energetic, sympathetic man, you may be perfectly as the child of God, knowing your Father and living in consecrated obedience to Him.

These are the three dimensions then of a full human life, its length, its breadth, its height. The life which has only length, only intensity of ambition, is narrow. The life that has length and breadth, intense ambition and broad humanity, is thin. It is like a great, flat plain, of which one wearies, and which sooner or later wearies of itself. The life which to its length and breadth adds height, which to its personal ambition and sympathy with man, adds the love and obedience of God, completes itself into the cube of the eternal city and is the life complete.

Think for a moment of the life of the great apostle, the manly, many-sided Paul. "I press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling;" he writes to the Philippians. That is the length of life for him. "I will gladly spend and be spent for you;" he writes to the Corinthians. There is the breadth of life for him. "God hath raised us up and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" he writes

to the Ephesians. There is the height of life for him. You can add nothing to these three dimensions when you try to account to yourself for the impression of completeness which comes to you out of his simple, lofty story.

We need not stop with him. Look at the Lord of Paul. See how in Christ the same symmetrical manhood shines yet more complete. See what intense ambition to complete His work, what tender sympathy with every struggling brother by His side, and at the same time what a perpetual dependence on His Father is in Him. "For this cause came I into the world." "For their sakes I sanctify myself." "Now, O Father, glorify Thou me." Leave either of those out and you have not the perfect Christ, not the entire symmetry of manhood.

If we try to gather into shape some picture of what the perfect man of heaven is to be, still we must keep the symmetry of these his three dimensions. It must be that forever before each glorified spirit in the other life there shall be set one goal of peculiar ambition, his goal, after which he is peculiarly to strive, the struggle after which is to make his eternal life to be forever different from every other among all the hosts of heaven. And yet it must be that as each soul strives towards his own attainment he shall be knit forever into closer and closer union with all the other countless souls which are striving after theirs. And the inspiring power of it all, the source of all the energy and all the love, must then be clear beyond all doubt; the ceaseless flood of light forever pouring forth from the self-living God to fill and feed the open lives of His redeemed who

live by Him. There is the symmetry of manhood perfect. There, in redeemed and glorified human nature, is the true heavenly Jerusalem.

I hope that we are all striving and praying now that we may come to some such symmetrical completeness. This is the glory of a young man's life. Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent. Mean to be something with all your might. Do not add act to act and day to day in perfect thoughtlessness, never asking yourself whither the growing line is leading. But at the same time do not dare to be so absorbed in your own life, so wrapped up in listening to the sound of your own hurrying wheels, that all this vast pathetic music, made up of the mingled joy and sorrow of your fellow-men, shall not find out your heart and claim it and make you rejoice to give yourself for them. And yet, all the while, keep the upward windows open. Do not dare to think that a child of God can worthily work out his career or worthily serve God's other children unless he does both in the love and fear of God their Father. Be sure that ambition and charity will both grow mean unless they are both inspired and exalted by religion. Energy, love, and faith, those make the perfect man. And Christ, who is the perfectness of all of them, gives them all three to any young man who, at the very outset of his life, gives up himself to Him. If this morning there is any young man here who generously wants to live a whole life, wants to complete himself on every side, to him Christ, the Lord, stands ready to give these three, energy, love, and faith, and to train them in him all together, till they make in him the perfect man.

VIII.

HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?

“And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves have ye?” —
MATT. xv. 34.

IT was one of the miracles of Jesus in which His nature was seen most interestingly. A multitude of people had followed him into the country, anxious to hear Him preach, some of them also needing and expecting that He would cure their sicknesses. They had lingered with Him for three days, not finding it in their hearts to leave Him and return, until their food was all exhausted and they were in wretched plight. Then Jesus declared His pity for them and consulted with His disciples. “I have compassion on the multitude,” He said, “because they continue with Me now three days and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting lest they faint in the way.” And His disciples reminded Him how impossible it was to buy any food off in the desert where they were; and then Jesus, intending to relieve the people’s wants by extraordinary power, turned to His disciples and asked them how many loaves of bread they had. They told Him seven, and a few little fishes. And He took the little which they had and blessed it, and it became under His blessing abundant for the supply of all the crowd.

Such is the story. The need of the great, hungry

host before Him touches the Lord and makes Him use His power to relieve them. But what is striking in the narrative is this, that when Jesus is moved by their suffering, He is moved in all His nature. Every part of Him is stirred. Not merely His emotions and His impulses, so that He is eager to relieve at once the wretchedness which looks up to Him out of their famished eyes, but His wisdom is stirred. All the principles of His life start into action together, all His care and pity. His care and pity for the soul as well as for the body move at once. It is this completeness of His nature, the way in which it is all one, and works and lives as one, that makes Him often so very different from us. Our lives are disjointed. One part of us works at a time. It is hard for us to be brave and prudent together ; hard for us to be liberal and just at the same time. Our sympathy is excited, and we help a man often in a way that does more harm than good, because we help with only one hand, with only half our nature ; with our pity but not with our wisdom ; with care for his hunger but with no care for his self-respect and manliness. But when Christ helps a man His whole nature in complete balance moves upon that other life. He feels all its claims and needs in their just proportion. So He meets Nicodemus in the midnight chamber, and the young man who comes to Him in the temple, and Thomas after the resurrection.

Now in this miracle of Jesus which I have recalled to you there is a meeting of generosity and frugality which is striking and suggestive. These two things do meet indeed with us. We try to be generous and frugal at the same time, but the result in us is mean.

We try to give and yet to save. We try to satisfy the instinct which makes us want to aid our brethren, and at the same time not to disappoint the instinct which makes us want to save and spare the things we have. But the result in us is mean. When Christ unites generosity and frugality the result in Him is noble. We feel His pity and care for the poor people a great deal more when we see Him take the wretched little stock of food which they possessed into His hands and make that the basis of His bounty, than if with an easy sweep of His hand He had bid the skies open and rain manna and quails once more upon the hungry host. His generosity is emphasized for us by its frugal methods, and His frugality is dignified by its generous purpose.

But surely the act is a very striking one. Here was He who could do everything. What hindered Him from sweeping the loaves they had aside and, by a superb exercise of power, bidding the very desert where they stood burst into a wilderness of fruits, break its hard ground with orchard trees all grown and laden, with streams of sweet water running down between them. But no ! He brings out the poor remnant which was so little and so miserable that they had thought nothing of it. He has to ask for it. They do not offer it. He says "How many loaves have ye?" and they seem to answer "Here is this, but what is this good for?" Then He takes that and multiplies it into all they need. It seems as if there were two principles here, so fundamental that the divine power of Jesus worked by them almost of necessity, so important that they must be made prominent even in all His impetuous eagerness to help those starving men. The first is the

principle of continuity, that what is to be must come out of what has been, that new things must come to be by an enlargement, a development, a change and growth of old things ; and the second is the principle of economy, that nothing however little or poor is to be wasted. They are two simple principles. I want to trace with you to-day the way in which they run through many departments of life. But notice, first, how clearly they stand out here in the miracle.

There are two ideas which belong to the notion of vast power in our crude conceptions of it. One is spasmodicalness and the other is waste. It is strange how both of these ideas appear in all men's first conceptions of the supernatural and of omnipotence. The first notions of a Deity are of One who is above all law and order and economy. Let the poor be niggardly, a slave to rules, counting over his little stock, squeezing every penny that he pays ; but let the All-Powerful be open-handed, counting as nothing what other beings must save, originating life whenever life is needed, full of an easy spontaneity, flinging the miracles of creation everywhere. But it is striking to see how as men go on and learn more of God, these ideas which were at first cast almost indignantly out of their conception of Him, gradually come back and are set in the place of highest honor. It is God's highest glory that He is a God of law. Continuousness is the crown of His government. That He brings every future out of some past is the charm of all His government. That He lets nothing go to waste is the highest perfection of His boundless resource. This is the highest knowledge of God. Continuity and economy are His solemn foot-

prints by which we trace His presence in our world. The need of evolution, the necessity that everything which is to be should come out of something which has been before, and the abhorrence of waste, — continuity and economy, — these are the proof-marks of Divinity.

Let us remember, first, how these two principles are stamped on all the operations of nature. We are all learning more and more, to some people's dismay, to other people's joy and inspiration, how nature loves to develop, how rare the acts of real creation are. The farmer goes and stands among rich western fields, and they cry out to him, "Give us seed and we will give you back a harvest that shall bewilder you with its immensity. There is no end to what we can do if you give us seed, but without seed we can do nothing." You go to Nature and say, "Feed me or I shall starve;" and her question comes back to you, "How many loaves have you? Give me something to begin with, however little it may be." Drop the old remnants of a past life into the ever fruitful soil, and all the possibilities of new life open. The spring-time finds last summer's roots still remaining in the ground, and quickens them to life again, and multiplies them into a richer summer still. Ingenious Nature finds a germ wherever it is dropped; but without the germ she will do nothing. Mere spontaneity she disowns and disproves more and more. Think what a place the world would be to live in if this were not so, if nature were a wizard, fitful and whimsical, doing her wonders in no sequel or connection with each other, with her pets and favorites, instead of being, as she is, a mother with her great, wise, reasonable laws of the house which press alike on all her

children, which no one of the children thinks of seeing changed or violated. That is what makes the world such a good home for man to dwell in, his school-room and his home at once. If anywhere in all the world it were on certain record, past all doubt, that just one solitary field, hidden away in some remote valley, had burst into a harvest of corn without a seed of corn having been sown in it by design or accident, that one freak of spontaneousness must work great harm among mankind. Men enough there are who would make that fact their one fact in natural science, and, disregarding the million fields which gave no harvest except in answer to seed, would go looking for the second field that was to give its crop for nothing; as when one man has found a pot of gold, a hundred more forget that gold, by the world's great general law, is earned, not found, and so go digging where they have buried nothing, seeking a prize that is not there. It is the continuity of life, the continuity of nature, that is our salvation. "Nothing from nothing" is the first law of her household, and her dullest children must learn it, for it is written on the walls that shelter them, on the ground they tread, on the table from which they eat, and on the tools with which they work.

And her law of economy is just as clear. Profusion, but no waste; this is the lesson that nature reads us everywhere. The dead leaves of this autumn are worked into next year's soil. The little stream that has watered the greenness of many meadows goes afterwards to do duty in the great sea. The vast surrounding atmosphere is made efficient over and over again for the breath of living men. Everywhere profusion, but no waste. For

men who need to be trained to reasonableness and care, God has built just the home they needed for their training, and sent us to live in this star which shines among His other stars steadily and soberly with its double light of continuity and economy.

The same truth appears in the use which God makes of men in the world. One of the most interesting studies of history is to see how unspasmodic is the appearance of great men. They are not accidents. Their lives are not isolated unaccountable meteors. However little it may be seen at the time of their lives, those who live after them, and look back over the ranges of history, can see that the heroes and great men are the culmination and result of processes. The times in which they live, the smaller men who have gone before them, are necessary to make them what they come to be. If it were not so, such lives might be expected to start forth indiscriminately everywhere, in all ages alike, in all stages and kinds of civilization. But barbarism is a flat level of monotony ; and certain artificial periods of culture are barren of all greatness. The personal element in the hero must be recognized. No age or circumstances can make a great man of a little one. But still all history bears witness that when God means to make a great man, He puts the circumstances of the world and the lives of lesser men under tribute. He does not fling His hero like an aërolite out of the sky. He bids him grow like an oak out of the earth. All earnest, pure, unselfish, faithful men who have lived their obscure lives well, have helped to make him. God has let none of them be wasted. A thousand unrecorded patriots helped to make Washington ; a thousand lovers of

liberty contributed to Lincoln. It is the continuity and economy of human life. The great feast grows out of the few loaves and fishes. And any man who in his small degree is living like the child of God, has a right to all the comfort of knowing that God will not let his life be lost, but will use it in the making of some great child of God, as he used centuries of Jewish lives, prophets, priests, patriots, kings, peasants, women, children, to make the human life of His Incarnate Son.

The same is true of truths, as well as of men. All the history of the progress of men's thought bears witness that when God wants to give men knowledge which they have not had before, He always opens it to them out of something which they have already known. There is no such thing as the dropping of a great truth any more than of a great man, suddenly, ready-made, out of the sky. "How is it with Revelation? How is it with Christianity?" you say. There, more than anywhere, it certainly is true that God works continuously and economically. What does Judaism mean? When God wanted to give the world the truth of Christ, He took that Hebrew nation which had some truth, truth of the right sort, though it was very meagre and insufficient, and mixed up with other things which were not true; He took that truth and brought Christianity out of that. And so when He has wanted to bring His Christianity, His highest truth, into any new region, He has always made it appear as the fulfilment, the completion, of what the people of that region knew already. Paul stands upon Mars' Hill at Athens, and wants to show those people Christ. How does he begin? He takes what he finds there. He points to their altar to

the unknown god, and says, "Him whom ye ignorantly worship I declare to you." He opens the books of their own writers and finds there his text, "As certain of your own poets have said." Out of their bit of truth he opens the rich completeness of the truth he has to tell. Is it not just exactly the miracle of Christ ? Paul comes and says to Athens, "How many loaves have you ?" and they say, "Seven, and a few little fishes. We believe in God ; we believe in responsibility ; we believe in man's childhood to God ; we believe in worship." And there, upon the Areopagus, Paul did what His Master did long before, by the Sea of Galilee ; "He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them and gave to the multitude ; and they did all eat and were filled."

And so it always is. There is a doctrine which we hear from time to time, that it is not the amount of truth which a man knows, but his earnestness in holding what he does know ; not his opinions, but his sincerity in holding his opinions, which is of value. That seems to me after all to be probably only a clumsy way of getting hold of this idea, that God always brings new truth out of old truth, and so that whoever has any bit of truth and really holds it fast is within the possibility of all the truth that God can give to man. There is no spontaneous generation of truth. "To him that hath shall be given." It seems to me that there is a great deal of light here of just the sort which a great many people need now. Men look around them and they say that old systems of religious thought are changing. Certainly they are. They always have been changing. There never was a time when they stood still. There

is no delusion about history more complete than to suppose that there has ever been a time when, from year to year and over a large body of mankind, religious ideas have been fixed and permanent and unanimously held. No man can put his finger upon such a period. They have always been changing as they are to-day. But this has been always true, that the new idea has always been born of the old, that when men have advanced to higher truth it has been from the basis of the truth which they have held already. It has been not by flinging their net out into the heavens in hopes to catch a star, but by digging deeper into the substance of the earth on which they stood, and finding there a root. And that is what we have to look for in the future. You and I cling to the old historic statements of our faith. We hold fast by the old historic church as it appears to-day. What is our feeling as we hold fast there ? Is it that the church to-day knows all the truth which man will ever know ? Is it that the religious conceptions which prevail to-day will never change ? A man must be deaf to the voices of the history behind him, blind to the signs of times around him, before he can think that. We stand expecting change and progress, new truth, new light. But we stand here in the historic church, in the historic truth, because we believe that the new truth must come out of this old truth, the perfect truth out of this partial truth, some day. We keep close to the seven loaves because we believe that when the multitude is fed it will be with an abundance blessed by God out of this, which, however meagre, is still real.

I would that men might understand that invitation

from the Christian Church to-day. It is not as the present possessor of all truth that she invites men to her household. She must not claim that. Men will discover that her claim is false if she does. But it is as the possessor of truth out of which God will call, nay is forever calling new truth, that she summons men not merely to a present which she offers, but to a future in which she believes. The church is progressive by her very essence. The church is man occupied by Christ. And since Christ cannot at once occupy man completely, and cannot be satisfied until He has occupied man completely, the church must make progress. If she ceases to advance she dies. Only in all her progress she believes in the continuity and economy of God. She looks for the truth which she is to know to come out of the truth which she knows already; and she is sure that no duty done or light attained in any most obscure corner of her life is wasted, but helps to the perfect duty and the perfect light that are to be. That is why in her is the true home for the man who most hopes and prays for the progress of mankind.

To every man who has advanced or who hopes that he may advance to higher, fuller, truer views of Christian truth, I think that this lesson of the loaves has something very plain to say. I see a man who thinks differently to-day from the way in which he thought ten years ago. He knows more truth. He is sure that God has given him new knowledge. How shall that man look back to what he used to know, to his old creed? Surely he may, with all rejoicing for the fuller light to which he has been brought, own the half-light in which he used to walk, and honor it. He may remember with

reverence how through some most imperfect conception of truth, which he could not possibly hold now, he came into the larger knowledge where he now finds his joy. Out of the notions which are dead now, he has drawn the life by which he lives. I think it is always a shame for a man to abuse any creed out of which he has passed into what he holds to be a truer creed. When he held that old creed he was either sincere or insincere. If he was insincere, let him abuse himself and not the creed which, whatever was its power or its weakness, could do nothing for a man like him. If he was sincere, let him know that much of the good faith with which he holds his new dear truth comes from the training of that old devotion. No, if God has led you to see truth which once you did not see, and to reject as error what once you thought was true, do not try to signalize your new allegiance by defaming your old master. The man who thinks to make much of the fuller truth to which he has come, by upbraiding the partial truth through which he came to it, is a poor creature. If I met a Mohammedan who had turned Christian, I would not like to hear him revile Mohammedanism. If I talk with a man from some other communion who has come into our church, I think the less and not the more of his churchmanship if he is always ready to defame the mother that bore him. If you are a more liberal believer than you used to be, the best proof that you can give of it will be in gratefully honoring the narrower creed in which you lived and by whose power you grew up and passed on.

Such is the message of our story to the man who has already advanced to larger truth than he once held. And when he turns from looking back and still looks

forward, when he hopes still to advance, then it has something else to say to him. It bids him hold fast all the truth that he has learned, to hold it all the faster because he knows it is not final. The preciousness of every particle of truth ! That is the lesson. If one gives me a diamond to carry across the sea, I may estimate its value and know just how much poorer I shall be and the world will be if I let it drop into the water and it sinks to the bottom. But if one gives me a seed of some new fruit to bring to this new land, I look at it with awe. It is mysteriously valuable. I cannot tell what preciousness is in it. Harvests on harvests, food for whole generations, are shut up in its little bulk. There always must be a difference as to the essential value set on truth, between him who thinks that truth is final and him who thinks that truth is germinal, between him who thinks it a diamond and him who thinks it a seed. It is a great mistake to think that a man will value a truth more if you teach him that it is the end of truth, than if you teach him that it is only the beginning. Nathanael clings all the more closely to the certainty that Jesus saw him under the fig-tree, because of the promise that he shall "see greater things than these." In the name of all you hope to know, cling close to what you know already. Make much of it, live up to it, count it very precious, hold it fast in the bosom of a loving life. Bring what you have and put it reverently into the Master's hands that He may make it more. It is not good for any man to let the vastness of unknown truth make him disparage the little that he knows. It is good for him to count his little precious because it is of the same kind with,

and may introduce him to, the greater after which he aspires.

I must not linger longer upon the application of our story to the matter of belief and truth. More interesting still are the ways in which it applies to character, and especially to the religious life. In all training of character the law of continuity and economy must be supreme. We often do not think so. We are ready to fancy that character can be spasmodic, a thing of constant new creations, of abrupt and sudden changes. I think that is the idea with which almost all people start in life. By and by, as life goes on, and they find that character does not change but perpetuates itself, they are very apt to turn to the other extreme and to believe that character once fixed is fixed forever, and so to settle into hopelessness. Hosts of young men are reckless because they believe that by and by they can be what they will. Hosts of old men are hopeless because it seems impossible that they can ever be anything but what they are. But both are wrong. Not lawlessness, and not slavish subjection to law, is the system under which we live. Progress and growth ; but growth from old conditions, progress from the basis of the old life ; this is our law. A man comes to you and says, " I have always been a bad man, and I never can be anything else." You answer him, if you are a true servant of Christ, " Poor soul, you little know the hope for all of us which is in Him who can make all things new." Another man comes and says, " I have been a bad man, but I am going to break with all my past, to live as if it all had never been, to be throughout another man." Again you must reply, " Poor soul, that too is

impossible. Be as different as you will, you must be the same man still. Your future must come out of your past. Your old failures, your old hopes, your old resolutions, your old shames, these cannot all be wasted. They can be wonderfully transformed, but they cannot be thrown away." The good man stands at last, the true man, fed with truth and glorifying God in daily action. But he learns more and more that he is the same with the old man whose memory he hates. He has been made anew, but it is the old humanity out of which the new life has been evoked. Is not this what many a poor creature needs to know ? You understand that you are wicked. You understand what it is to be good. But the gulf between is dreadful and impassable. What is there in you that can grow into that ? Nothing, nothing, that can grow into that of its own strength. You must go on forever, and be forever what you are, unless some higher power touches you. But none the less is it true that when that higher power touches you it must make what you are to be out of what you are already. The development out of the old still needs the mightier force. Evolution is not atheism. God must do what must be done, but God will do it. God will make you good, by sending His light and love into this past of yours and giving all that there is good in it its true development and consecration.

How natural this method is. How necessarily any one who tries to do the work of God falls into God's ways of doing it. Never are you so near to God as when you try to help some miserable sinner to a better life. And how instinctively you take God's method then. Here is a poor outcast with a wretched, wicked, it may

be a hideous life. How will you go to work to lift that wretchedness? Will you not try to find something in all that life that you can speak to, something that you can cultivate and make to grow? You find perhaps some one affection. The mother's love is left when everything else seems to have gone in brutishness. The power to feel a kindness is still there when the power to feel a blow has long since died. The sensitiveness to the cry of need is still alive when the ear can no longer hear the calls and threats of duty. Shame lingers where ambition has departed. To these you speak. Over the life of each poor outcast you let your hands wander till, in the midst of all the death, they find one spot which, however feebly, trembles with life. You can do nothing till you have found that. When you have found that, everything is possible. O my dear friends, if you have not learned it, this is the lesson you must learn. If you are moved with a vague desire to help men be better men, you must know that you can do it not by belaboring the evil but by training the good that there is in them. If you could kill all a man's sins you would only make him a less bad man. You would not make him a better man. That you could make him only by developing his goodness. So imitate your Lord. When you stand face to face with a hungry-eyed creature whom you want to feed with better life, be sure that you imitate your Lord. Be sure that you begin by asking him "How many loaves have you, my poor friend? What can you give me to begin with? What has God done for you already? Show me your best, and we will pray to God together that as you put it into His hands He will bless it and multiply it, till your

whole life is fed with the grace which is all His but which He has made yours by bidding it work upon the substance of what He had given you already."

The unreality of conversion ! The inability of a man to realize that he can be the subject of such a change, can enter upon such a new life as he hears other men describe ! Surely you recognize that unreality. Where does it come from ? Is it not largely from the fact that men do not understand this truth of the continuity and economy of grace. This is the fundamental truth about conversion. Not to sweep the old manhood off and make a new one in its place ; but to make a new manhood out of the old one, that is what God's Spirit is always trying to do. If I could picture God's Spirit coming for the first time to a soul ; if I could forget that all our descriptions of the Spirit coming to the soul of man are figures, because God's Spirit has been with every soul from its first moment ; if I could picture God's Spirit coming for the first time to your soul, I can imagine only one beginning of His work. "How many loaves have you ?" "What is there for me to go to work on here ?" An honorable love of truth, an unswerving business faithfulness, a keen, quick sensitiveness to the rights of others, a tender pity which leaps up at the sight of suffering. The Spirit finds these there. These, and what are they ? They are not religion. O, no ! surely they are not. More and more clear, I think, it grows that they are not. More and more distinctly over our human life, with all its best affections, hangs the serene heaven of the divine life, the heaven of the love of God into which our human affections must enter before they become religious.

into which they cannot enter till they have been born again. No! These which the Spirit finds in you are not religion. Never let yourself think that they are, and so depreciate and disregard the work which the Spirit has to do in you. They are not religion; but they are the material of the religious life. They are the part of your nature in which you may become religious. They are the stone in your nature out of which the temple may be built. When the temple is built out of that native stone, no less wonderful, indispensable, and gracious will appear the skill of the Architect, without whom it never could have been; yet still the temple, standing there with its divine strength and beauty of tower and pinnacle, will be real to you, will be your temple while it is God's, because of the nativeness of the stone from which God made it. The love of truth, touched by God, has been lifted into a sublime aspiration after Him. The business faithfulness has been transfigured into the patient doing of His will. The regard for the rights of others has been exalted into a passionate desire that every man should have the chance to do, and be his best. And pity for men's sorrows has been changed into a lofty honor for man's value as the son of God in Christ. How shall we tell what has come to pass? Let us take St. Peter's great words, "Until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts." The coming of God's Spirit is the rising of the sun. The world is a new world when the sun has arisen. Light and life filling it everywhere proclaim how new it is. But the sunrise needs a world already there to shine upon, and it is out of the same old mountains and valleys which have been dreary in the darkness that it makes its miracles of light.

That is conversion. Would that men might learn it, so that it need not seem so unnatural to them, so that it need not seem so impossible for them. And the same is true about every progress of the Christian soul to the higher and higher, even to the highest Christian life. Continuity and economy ; these are the laws of Him who is leading us, the Captain of our salvation. He always binds the future to the past, and He wastes nothing. O, there are some here who want to get away from all their past ; who, if they could, would fain begin all over again. Their life with Christ seems one long failure. But you must learn, you must let God teach you, that the only way to get rid of your past is to get a future out of it. God will waste nothing. There is something in your past, something, even if it only be the sin of which you have repented, which, if you can put into the Savior's hands, will be a new life for you. Doubt that ; doubt that God in all these years has given you something through which He may give you vastly more if you will let Him, and what reasonable conception have you left of God ? I think it is a dreadful thing to hear a man or woman say, " I have been a Christian, I have tried to serve God for such and such a number of years, and it has been all a mistake." O, how little they know God, to think it could have been a mistake ! It is as much a wrong to the honor of God to disown what He has done for us, as to disown what He has done for any other man ; and yet we very often call it humility.

We want to honor our own present as the material for a possible future. In order that we may honor it we must know how Christ honors it. He honors it for what it can produce in His hands. He honors it as a

seed. I think sometimes of how, if the Lord had preached to men who were mostly farmers instead of shepherds, He would have made them another parable. Instead of the lost sheep on the mountains, He would have told of the lost seed on the barn floor. Instead of the love that sought the wanderer and brought it to the fold, He would have wonderfully pictured the love that found the trampled grain, with all its power of life, and buried it in the rich ground.

“How many loaves have you?” It is the Lord’s first question ; and the hands of those who really want His help, search their robes to see what they have hidden there. One brings his joy ; another brings his pain ; another brings his helpless desire ; another brings his poor resolution ; another has nothing to bring except just his sorrow that he has nothing. It is a poor collection ; only seven loaves, and a few little fishes ; but it is enough. His blessing falls upon them, and they come back to the souls which gave them up to Him, multiplied into the means of healthy, holy, happy life.

May God help us all, every day of our lives, to come to Christ just as we are, that He may make us more and more just what we ought to be.

IX.

THE NEED OF SELF-RESPECT.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

“And He said unto me : Son of Man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.” — EZEK. ii. 1.

THERE are many passages in the Bible which describe the servants of God, as their Lord's messages came to them, falling upon their faces on the earth, and in that attitude of most profound humiliation listening to what God had to say. Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, they are all seen at one time or another prostrate, and signifying their readiness to receive what God should tell them by the complete disowning of anything like worth or dignity in themselves. There is a great truth set forth in all such pictures. It is that only to human humility can God speak intelligibly. Only when a man is humble can he hear and understand the words of God. But in the passage which I have taken for my text this morning, there is another picture with another truth. When God was going to give a message to Ezekiel, He said to him, “Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee.” Not on his face but on his feet ; not in the attitude of humiliation but in the attitude of self-respect ; not stripped of all strength, and lying like a dead man waiting for life to be given him, but strong in the intelligent consciousness of privilege,

and standing alive, ready to co-operate with the living God who spoke to him ; so the man now is to receive the word of God. I hope that we shall be able to comprehend this idea largely and truly enough to see that it is not contradictory to the other, but certainly it is different from it. When God raised Ezekiel and set him on his feet before He spoke to him, was it not a declaration of the truth that man might lose the words of God because of a low and grovelling estimate of himself, as well as because of a conceited one? The best understanding of God could come to man only when man was upright and self-reverent in his privilege as the child of God.

If this be true, is it not a great truth? Is it not a truth well worthy of being set out in one of these graphic Bible-pictures, and one that needs continually to be preached? The other truth is often urged upon us ; that if we are proud we shall be ignorant ; if we do not listen humbly we shall listen in vain to hear the Divine voice of which the world is full. We are pointed continually to men on every side who have evidently no wisdom but their own, because they have never deeply felt that they needed any other, and who, therefore, are filling the land with their foolishness. But this other truth is not so often preached, nor, I think, so generally felt ; unless you honor your life you cannot get God's best and fullest wisdom ; unless you stand upon your feet you will not hear God speak to you.

There is much to-day of thoughtless and foolish depreciation of man and his condition. I want upon Thanksgiving Day, in the light of the Thanksgiving truth,

to enter a quiet, earnest and profoundly sincere protest against it. I want to claim that it is blind to facts. I want to assert that it is not truly humble. I want to denounce it as the very spirit of ignorance, shutting men's ears hopelessly against the hearing of all the highest truth. The question comes to us most pressingly to-day. Shall we, can we, thank God for His mercies, standing upon our feet and rejoicing that we are men, thoroughly grateful for the real joy of life? Back of all the special causes for thanksgiving which our hearts recognize, is there a thankfulness for that on which they all rest and in which they are sewn like jewels in a cloth of gold; for the mere fact of human life, for the mere privilege and honor of being men and women? If there is not this, no gratitude is possible; or only such a gratitude as the poor wretch in his dungeon, for whom life has been robbed of every charm, feels to his jailor who thrusts through the window to him the crust of bread and jug of water which are to prolong his miserable life. It may seem like an awful and unreasonable question; but indeed it is not so. The latest, and in many quarters the favorite, philosophy of the day, — that which boasts itself as being the supreme achievement of the nineteenth century, the perfect flower of the wisdom of mankind, — is that which under its fantastic name of Pessimism, declares deliberately that human life is a woe and a curse, and that the "will to live" is the fiend which persecutes humanity, which must be utterly destroyed before man can be happy. So speaks philosophy; and when we talk with unphilosophical men who have no theory, I think we are astonished to see how their view of life is essentially what

this philosophy would give them. Either in the soft way or the hard way, either in sentimental whimperings or in dogged, rude defiance, men are saying that life is miserable. Either in large or little view, either looking at the great course of history or at the petty course of their own lives, men say the world is growing worse from day to day. The calm pessimism of the schools becomes the querulous discontent of the street philosopher, or the bitter cynicism of the newspaper satirist, or, what is far more significant than either, the silent distress and bewilderment of the man who sees no bright hope for himself or fellow-man. I am sure you know whereof I speak. In large circles of life (and they are just those circles in which a great many of us live) there is an habitual disparagement of human life, its joys and its prospects. Man is on his face. It seems to me that he must hear God's voice calling him to another attitude, or he is hopeless. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee."

What shall we say then of this prevalent depression as to the character and hopes of our human life, which is, I think, one of the symptoms of our time? Sometimes it is very sweeping and talks despairingly of man in general. Sometimes it is special and merely believes that our own age or our own land is given up to moral corruption and decay. As to its general character, I think it may be said that it comes from an inspection of human life which is neither the shallowest nor the deepest. It has got below the surface facts and first appearances of things, but it has not got down to their essential and central truth. The surface of the earth is warm with the direct rays of the sun. The centre of

the earth, perhaps, is warm with its own essential and quenchless fire. But between the two, after you get below the warm surface, and before you approach the warm heart of the globe, it is all cold and damp and dark and dreary. And so there is the surface sight of life, which is bright and enthusiastic. There is the sight of life which is deeper than this, which is sad and puzzled. There is the deepest sight of all, which is bright again with a truer light, and enthusiastic again with a soberer but a more genuine happiness. The character of the first sight, the most simple and superficial, very few people will be inclined to dispute. There are not many misanthropes who will deny that the first aspect of things which meets the eye of man is tempting and exhilarating. The external world is too manifestly beautiful ; the sun is too bright, the fields too green, the sea too blue, the breeze too fresh, the luxuries of taste and sound and smell too manifold and sweet ; the human frame is strung too thickly with the faculties of pleasure ; the first and universal relationships of men, friendship and childhood and fatherhood, are too spontaneous sources of delight for any reasonable man to say that the first and simplest aspect of human life is not a happy thing. The charm may be only apparent, but at least there is an apparent charm. These men may be very foolish to find such joy in life, but certainly the men whom we see do find joy in it. To the child it is all joyous. Sometimes the light foot breaks through the thin crust for a moment, but the spring of the young walker sets him the next instant on the crust again, with only sufficient sense of danger to exhilarate, not to depress. And many men who never

cease to be children keep the first sight of life all through, and never see below its bright surface nor hear another sound behind the music of its most palpable delights. So that the first aspect of life makes the bright optimist which every live and healthy boy ought to be and is. But this is only on the surface, as most men soon find out. It is real but superficial. By and by the exceptions and the contradictions and the limitations begin to show themselves. This first happiness of life is spotted with unhappiness; and it is not enough, even if it were unspotted, to satisfy the man who tries to find his satisfaction in it. Then comes the danger of misanthropy. There, just below the surface, lie the abject or defiant misanthropes; the men who count the sick people till they say there is no health, who count the dull days till they say there is no sunshine, who count the failures till they say there is no success, who count the frauds till they declare there is no honesty, and the fools till they laugh at the idea of wisdom. You see they have crawled down out of the sunlight. They have left the surface and its simple presumptions to burrow just under them among the exceptions and contradictions. They keep the same idea of what the purpose of life is and what sort of happiness it ought to have; only, while the boy in his optimism cried, as he saw the bird flash up in the sunlight, "Here it is," the middle-aged pessimist creeps with the mole underground and says, "It is not anywhere." Now what comes deeper still? What is there more profound than the lamentations over the sin and misery of life, which have succeeded to the first enthusiastic praise of everything, which came first of all? What is the next step if a

man can take it? I answer, certainly a new idea of what life is for, of what happiness a man really needs; that is what must come. The notion of education and of character as the end of life, of something which a man is to be made, and by the power to make which all of life's experiences are to be judged, that opens to a man; and as he passes into that he finds the heat beginning to glow once more around him. He is coming in to the warm centre of the world. There come forth adaptations for the higher work in things which have seemed wholly unfitted to produce the lower. Things which never could have made a man happy, develop a power to make him strong. Strength and not happiness, or rather only that happiness which comes by strength, is recognized as the end of human living. And with that test and standard the lost order and beauty reappear. The world is man's servant and friend; and man, full of the deeper self-respect, is ready to hear deeper and diviner messages of God.

This is the order. This is the way in which we pass to deeper knowledge, which is always tending to the happiest knowledge of our own life. First, life is a success because the skies are bright and the whole world is beautiful. Then life is a failure because every joy is in danger of disappointment, and every confidence may prove untrue. Then life is a success again because through disappointment and deceit it still has power to make a man pure and strong. He who has delighted in the outside pleasures and then bowed down in misery because they disappeared, rises up at last and stands upon his feet when he discovers that God has a far deeper purpose about him than to keep him gay and

cheerful, and that is to make him good; and with that deepest intention no accidents can interfere; with that discovery all his despair disappears, and a self-respect, which is full of hope and ready for intelligence, comes in its place.

This is the way in which a man's despair or contempt about himself is thoroughly undermined, by his getting a truer view of what the world and all its treatments of man's life are for. But now, I think, another fact comes in. Many men own the possibility of good which is open to them, while still they are despairing or cynical about the world itself, about the course of human life in general. There are many good people, I believe, who devoutly recognize the chance of character, of spiritual culture, which is offered to them by living in the midst of a world of sin and sorrow; but the sinful and sorrowful world itself seems to them desperate. They may be purified, but the fire that purifies them is the burning up of a miserable world. This is the strange hopelessness about the world, joined to a strong hope for themselves, which we see in many good religious people. It is what really lies at the heart of all the exclusive and seemingly selfish systems of religion, what makes it possible for good men to believe in election. In their own hearts they recognize indubitably that God is saving them, while the aspect of the world around them seems to show them that the world is going to perdition. That is a common enough condition of mind; but I think it may be surely said that it is not a good, nor can it be a permanent, condition. God has mercifully made us so that no man can constantly and purely believe in any great privilege for

himself unless he believes in at least the possibility of the same privilege for other men. A man's hold on his own privilege either disappears or grows impure the moment that he gives the rest of the world up in despair. Under this principle, no man who believes that the world at large is growing hopelessly worse, can keep a lively and effectual hope that he himself is growing better. Indeed this is the danger of that current habit of depreciating man, and especially of depreciating our own times and surroundings, which is very common among us. It is not merely a speculative opinion. It is an influence which must reach a man's character. A man can have no high respect for himself unless he has a high respect for his human kind. He can have no strong hope for himself unless he has a strong hope for his human kind. And so, whatever be his pure tastes and lofty principles, one trembles for any man whom he hears hopelessly decrying human life in general, or the special condition of his own time.

It is time, perhaps, that we looked a little more closely at this, which is no doubt a notable and alarming characteristic of our time; the number of intelligent men who think and talk despairingly of human nature and of human life. You meet them everywhere. Their books are on your tables. Their talk is in your ears at every corner of the streets. Where has this fact, then, come from if it is, as we believe, the growingly prominent characteristic of our generation? It is not hard to point out some of its sources. Sometimes, with some men, it is a deliberate philosophy. Some of our brightest men have, as I said, really reasoned about the world, and have come to the conclusion that it is bad

and not good, and that it is growing worse and not better. It is the issue of all the fatalistic philosophies, and we all know how the strong interest of men in the working of second causes, and in the uniformity of law, has aroused a tendency to fatalism in almost all departments of thinking. Make all life a machine, and the individual is lost ; with individual life, goes responsibility ; with responsibility, go hope and chance. This is the way in which the philosophical pessimism of our time is made. It begins by the denial of the individual and his free will ; and then, with the only power capable of moral goodness taken out, the universe is left unmoral, and an unmoral universe becomes immoral. Its salt is gone and its corruption comes.

But the number of speculative pessimists is small ; the number of believers in the badness of the world is large. Where do the rest of them come from ? In large part, I believe, from another characteristic of our time, from the strong feeling of interest in, and responsibility for, the world's condition, which comes from the increased activity of mind and conscience, and which begets often narrowness of view about the world's condition. A thousand men to-day care whether the state is pure, for one who cared in the last century. A thousand eyes are anxiously watching the church, for one that looked to see whether she did her work a hundred years ago. A thousand hearts sink at a catastrophe in the purity of social life, where once only one felt the disgrace. Out of all this watchfulness has come a sensitiveness and a narrowness. Because our own age has its vices which distress us, we forget the vices of other times, and we let ourselves judge the world by that bit

of the world which is just under our own eyes. When one thing is being done here in New England, just the opposite thing may be coming to pass on the Ganges or the Nile. Almost every day you hear men assuming that, because America happens to have grown from a very poor country to a very rich one within the last century, and has developed, of course, the vices that belong to wealth, therefore the world is worse to-day than it was a century ago. It is vastly unreasonable, but it is very natural for a conscientious American to think so. Only when he lifts up his eyes and finds it simply impossible to let them fall on any century in all the world's history which was better than this; any century when government was purer, thought or action freer, society sweeter, the word of man more sacred than it is to-day, only then does he come back and recognize how he has been allowing the nearness and pressingness of his own circumstances to delude him.

But yet, again, this time of ours, these men of ours, are marked by a singular depth of personal experience. The personal emotions, the anxieties with regard to personal conditions, are very intense. It is a time of much morbidness, and so I think that the danger under which men always labor, of letting the universe take the color of the windows of their own life through which they look at it, was never so dangerous as to-day. More men to-day think the world is wretched because they are sad and bewildered, than would have transferred their own conditions to the outside universe in less introspective and self-conscious times. The simplest men in the simplest ages, when they were in sorrow, opened their windows inward to let the world's sunlight in. The

elaborate and subtle men in the elaborate and subtle ages, in their sorrow, open their windows outward and darken the bright world with their darkness. And among such men, in such an age, we live.

And one point more. When all these causes, in a time like ours, have set a few earnest, serious, sad men to the hard task of depreciating human life, then it becomes the fashion, and all the light, flippant tongues catch up their cry and repeat it. A few strong men go wrapt in melancholy because they so intensely feel the evil of the world, and straightway every weakling who wants to be thought wise must twist his cloak about his head too, and go stalking tragically among his fellow-men, — blind in his mock misery, stumbling over them and making them stumble over him. This was the Byronism of the generation of our fathers, and this is a large part of the pessimism of ours. Sometimes it scowls and frowns and scolds; sometimes it smiles and bows as it declares that religion and politics and social life and personal character are hurrying to ruin; but it is an affectation and a fashion, and is to be discriminated carefully, and set aside in contempt, when we are trying to estimate what there is really respectable and significant in the present defamation of humanity.

Such is a statement of some of the reasons, the principal ones I think, why men have come to talk of their race and its hopes as we very often hear them talk to-day. They are connected, as you see, with much that is noblest in our age. All together they produce this condition of distrust and fear and wonder about what is coming, with a certain preference for believing that something very bad is coming, with which we are

all of us familiar. Men are off their feet, as it were. They are demoralized. There is less readiness to assert the essential nobleness and lofty destiny of man. A state of things like this seems to me to be significant as to where we stand in the world's moral history. We have passed out of the first light-heartedness of youth. We are preparing, by disappointment and bewilderment, for the more serious and earnest satisfactions of middle life. If you recall what I said about the degrees or stages in men's conception of the world's character and prospects, you can apply it now to what I have just been saying. The light and airy optimism which believed that everything was right because the sun shone in the sky, is past for thoughtful mortals. You cannot persuade men to-day that the world is good because there are many pleasant things in it. They probably never will believe that in the old easy way again. Once having come to see that a pleasant world which is all full of sin and pain, is all the more dreadful because of its outside pleasantness, there is no return to the first easy satisfaction. The only two things that are still open to man are these : a blank despair, which gives itself up to inevitable deterioration ; or a new thought of the world as a place of moral training where happiness or unhappiness are accidents, but where, by both happiness and unhappiness, men and nations must be made and can be made just and pure and good.

Which of these two are we bound for ? Surely the second, not the first. But to that second we can come only as we keep, in all our bewilderment over the world's misery and sin, the sense, the certainty of God. There is the point of all. If a man dwells upon the

misery of human life and does not believe in God, he is dragged down among the brutes. If a man believes in the misery of human life and does believe in God, he is carried up to higher notions of God's government, which have loftier purposes than mere happiness or pain. The one great question about all the kind of temper of which I have spoken is whether it still believes in God. If it does, it must come out in light through whatever darkness it may have first to pass. If it does not, however wise it grows, it certainly must end in folly and despair. Whether our philosophy is theistic or atheistic ; whether you, as you look at the snarl of life with all its misery and sin, know for a surety that God is within it all ; these are the questions, the answer to which decides whether our philosophy and our observation of life are on their face or on their feet, are full of the curse of despair or full of the blessing of hope.

For all belief in God is, must be, belief in ultimate good. No view of the universe can be despairing which keeps Him still in sight. "Ah," but you say, "do we not all believe in God ? Is there one of us that denies His existence ?" Probably not ; only remember that there is an atheism which still repeats the creed. There is a belief in God which does not bring Him, nay, rather say which does not let Him come, into close contact with our daily life. The very reverence with which we honor God may make us shut Him out from the hard tasks and puzzling problems with which we have to do. Many of us who call ourselves theists are like the savages who, in the desire to honor the wonderful sun-dial which had been given them, built a roof over it. Break down the roof ; let God in on your life. And then, however your

first light optimism may be broken up, and the evil of the world may be made known to you, you never can be crushed by it. You will stand strong on your feet and hear God when He comes to teach you the lessons of the higher, soberer, spiritual optimism to which they come who are able to believe that all things work together for good to the man or the people that serve Him.

That was the optimism of Jesus. There was no blindness in His eyes, no foolish indiscriminate praise of humanity upon His lips. He saw the sin of that first century and of Jerusalem a thousand times more keenly than you see the sins of this nineteenth century and of America. But He believed in God. Therefore He saw beyond the sin, salvation. He never upbraided the sin except to save men from it. He never beat the chains except to set the captive free ; never, as our cynics do, for the mere pleasure of their clanking. "Not to condemn the world, but to save the world," was His story of His mission. And at His cross the shame and hope of humankind joined hands.

O that the truth of our Thanksgiving Day might be His truth ; the truth that all the sin we see, all the woe that is around us, are pledges dark and dreadful, but still certain pledges, of man's possible higher life. May I not beg you now to think whether you have been doing wholly right about the matter of which I have spoken to you to-day ? If you have been dwelling solely on the evil that is in man, or on the special evil which you think is in your church, your nation, or your age, see whether that habit has not blinded your intelligence and weakened your strength. It has cast you down upon

your face. Stand up, on this Thanksgiving Day, stand up upon your feet! Believe in man! Soberly and with clear eyes believe in your own time and place. There is not, and there has never been, a better time or a better place to live in. Only with this belief can you believe in hope and believe in work. Only to a self-respect which stands erect in conscious privilege, erect for expected duty, can God speak His great and blessed messages and be completely understood.

X.

THE HEROISM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”—Acts xiii. 2, 3.

THE work was foreign missions. The disciples in Judea were sending out two of their number to preach the gospel in other parts of Asia and, by and by, in Europe. And therefore these words belong to us to-day, upon this one Sunday in the year when we give our especial thoughts to the foreign missionary work. This Sunday always comes back to us with the same feeling and color. It enters in among our common Sundays with a larger power than belongs to them. It seems as if the arms of Christ were stretched out a little more widely. As sometimes when our Lord was preaching in the temple, those who stood nearest to Him and caught His words the freshest from His lips, those to whom His words had been long familiar, must have seen Him lift up His eyes and look across their heads to the multitude beyond who stood upon the outskirts of the crowd; and as, while they watched Him finding out and speaking to those strangers, their own thoughts of Him must have enlarged; as, perhaps at first surprised and jealous, they must have come to understand Him more and love Him better for this new sight of

His love for all men, — so it is with us to-day. Indeed there is no feeling which the Jew had when he found that what had been his religion was going to become the possession of the world, which does not repeat itself now in men's minds when they hear their gospel demanding of them to send it to the heathen. It must have been a surprise and bewilderment at first to find that they were not the final objects of God's care, but only the medium through which the light was to shine that it might reach other men. I can conceive that Joseph and Mary may have wondered why those Gentiles should have come out of the East to worship their Messiah. But very soon the enlargement of their faith to be the world's heritage proved its power by making their faith a far holier thing for them than it could have been if it had remained wholly their own. Christ was more thoroughly theirs when through them He had been manifested to the Gentiles. And so always the enlargement of the faith brings the endearment of the faith, and to give the Savior to others makes Him more thoroughly our own.

With this thought let me speak to you to-day. Let me plead for the foreign missionary idea as the necessary completion of the Christian life. It is the apex to which all the lines of the pyramid lead up. The Christian life without it is a mangled and imperfect thing. The glory and the heroism of Christianity lies in its missionary life. This is the subject of which I wish to speak to you this morning.

The event which is recorded in the text, the departure of the disciples on their first missionary journey, was a distinct epoch in the history of Christianity. There had

been some anticipations of it. The gospel had been preached to the Samaritans. Philip had baptized the Ethiopian. Peter had carried his message to the Roman centurion. But now for the first time a distinct, deliberate, irrevocable step was taken, and two disciples turned their back upon the home of Judaism, which had been thus far the home of Christianity, and went forth with the world before them. They went indeed in the first place to the Jews who lived in foreign lands ; but when they went away from Judea they started on a work from which there was no turning back and which could not be limited. Before they had been many weeks upon their journey, it had become distinctly a mission to the Gentiles. And now, from the time when Paul and Barnabas went out upon this mission, the body of the disciples divides itself into two parts. There are the disciples who stay at home and manage affairs in Jerusalem, and there are the disciples who go abroad to tell the story of the cross. Peter and James are in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas and Luke go wandering to Ephesus and Athens and Corinth. And, as we read our Bibles, gradually the history detaches itself from the Holy City. The interest of Christianity does not linger with the wise and faithful souls who stay at home. Peter and James pass out of our thought. It is Paul, with his fiery zeal and eager tongue, restless to find some new ears into which to pour the story of his Master ; it is he in whom the interest of Christianity is concentrated. He evidently represents its spirit. Its glory and its heroism are in him. The other disciples seem to feel this. They recognize that it is coming. They are almost like John the Baptist when he beheld

Jesus. As they come down to the ship to see their companions embark, as they fast and pray and lay their hands on them and send them away, there is a solemnity about it all which is like the giving up of the most precious privilege of their work, its flower and crown, to these its missionaries ; and they turn back to their administrative work at home as to a humbler and less heroic task.

The relation of the disciples who stayed at home to the disciples who went abroad to preach is the perpetual relation of the home pastor to the foreign missionary. The work of the two is not essentially different. It is essentially the same. Both have the same gospel to proclaim. But the color of their lives is different. Paul is heroic. James is unheroic, or is far less heroic. I think as we go on we shall see that those words have very clear meanings. They are not vague. But even before we have defined them carefully they express a feeling with which the missionary and the pastor impress us. Heroism is in the very thought of missions. Patient devotedness, but nothing heroic, is associated with the ministry of him who works for the building up of Christian lives where Christianity already is the established faith.

I am sure that I speak for a very great many of my brethren in the home ministry when I say that we feel this continually. "Sent to tell men of Christ," — that is our commission. And men certainly need to be told of Christ over and over again. Those who have known Him longest need to hear His name again and again in their temptations, their troubles, their joys. We need to tell men of Him all their lives, until we whisper His familiar name into their ears just growing dull in

death. I rejoice to tell you of Him always, those of you who have heard of Him most and longest; but you can imagine, I am sure, how, standing here in your presence, and letting my thought wander off to a foreign land where some missionary is standing face to face with people who never heard of Christ before, I feel that that man is "telling men of Christ" in a realler, directer way than I am. He is coming nearer to the heart, the true idea and meaning of the work we both are doing, than I am. We are like soldiers holding the fortress. He is the soldier who makes the sally and really does the fighting. I know the answer. I know what some of you are saying in your hearts whenever we talk together about foreign missions. "There are heathen here in Boston," you declare; "heathen enough here in America. Let us convert them first, before we go to China." That plea we all know, and I think it sounds more cheap and more shameful every year. What can be more shameful than to make the imperfection of our Christianity at home an excuse for not doing our work abroad? It is as shameless as it is shameful. It pleads for exemption and indulgence on the ground of its own neglect and sin. It is like a murderer of his father asking the judge to have pity on his orphanhood. Even the men who make such a plea feel, I think, how unheroic it is. The minister who does what they bid him do feels his task of preaching to such men perhaps all the more necessary but certainly all the less heroic, as he sees how utterly they have failed to feel the very nature of the gospel which he preaches to them.

But I must come closer to our subject. "The heroism of Christianity lies in its missionary life." And let us

start with this. Every great interest and work of men has its higher and its lower, its heroic and its unheroic phases. Take public life for instance. Two servants of the people work together in the same office, and both alike are faithful, both are honest. Both try to do their duty. But one thinks of the state and of that interest of the state for which he labors, as serving him. The other thinks of himself as serving the state. There is the difference. To one the currents of life flow inward towards the centre, which is his person. To the other the currents of life flow outward towards the interests for which he lives. So it is with every man's profession. Of two men who are practising law, one dwells upon the idea of the law and gives himself to its development. The other dwells upon the idea of himself and considers that the law is given to him for his support. Of two doctors, one makes medicine his servant to build up his fame or fortune; the other makes himself the servant of medicine, to give what strength there is in him to her development and application. In every one of your professions there are both kinds of workers. There are the men who are given to their work, and the men who consider that their work is given to them. Their methods may be just alike. They may study in the same school, read the same books, work in the same office; but anybody who comes near them feels the difference. There is the heroic element in one, and the heroic element is absent in the other.

And what is true about a special occupation is true about life as a whole. The fundamental difference lies between the men who think that life is for them, that this great world of living things is the reservoir out of

which they are to draw pleasure and good ; and the other men who think that they are for life, that in this universe of living things there is a divine idea and purpose to which they, coming in their appointed time in the long ages, are to minister with what power of service they possess. Everywhere there runs this difference. It appears in men's thought about God. To one man God is a vast means, working for his comfort. To another man God is a vast end, to which his powers strive to make their contribution. Everywhere there runs this difference. And it is just this larger conception of life everywhere to which the name heroic properly belongs. This largeness involves unselfishness. The heroic public man or lawyer or doctor or liver of human life is he who gives himself to his interest instead of asking his interest to give itself to him. The heroic moments in all of our most unheroic lives have been those in which we have been able to give ourselves to our art or occupation, counting our lives contributions to its idea, instead of demanding that it should give itself to us and contribute to our wealth or welfare.

It is clear then, first of all, that heroism is not merely a thing of circumstances. There are two ideas which men are apt vulgarly to associate with their idea of a hero. One of them is prominence, and the other is suffering. The ordinary notion of a hero is either of a prominent and famous man, or of a man who has borne suffering manfully. Now it may be that an unselfish and devoted life in such a world as this in which we live has such a tendency to bring a man into hard conflict with the hard things about him, that pain will come to be a very frequent accompaniment of heroism. But evidently, if

what I have said is true, there is no necessary company between them. There may be pain without heroism, pain inspired by selfishness, and making the man who suffers all the smaller and more self-involved. On the other hand there may be heroism without pain, self-devotion with all the circumstances of happiness. And so with regard to prominence. The essence of heroic life is the apprehension by any man of the idea of a cause, and the abandonment of his life to that idea. Such an abandonment, such a filling of his life with such an idea, will make him naturally the type-man of his cause, will set him in its fore-front and will bring him into conflict with all men who oppose his cause ; but these are accidents. In obscurity and luxury it may be that a man still is a hero. Even there he may fasten upon the idea of a cause and give himself up to it and effectively live for it, and if he does that he is a hero. In heaven all life will be heroic. Every being there will live for the divine ideas of things. No man will think that the golden streets and the hosts that fill them, and the unspeakable Majesty which sits in the centre of all upon the throne, are for him. Every soul will delight to count its eternity a contribution to them. But there will be no unhappiness, no pain in heaven. The accidents will have been changed, and will show that they were never more than accidents, but the essence of heroism will be the same forever.

I put then as the first element of heroism this quality of Ideality ; the power, that is, of getting hold of the idea of any cause or occupation or of life in general, so that the cause, the occupation, or life becomes a living thing to which a man may give himself with all his powers.

That quality of ideality is the essential thing in heroism. There can be no hero without that. It is just what makes the difference between the "dumb, driven cattle" and the "heroes in the strife." Look through the ranks of your profession. Are there not both cattle and heroes there? Are there not times in your work when you are of the cattle sort, when the idea fades out of what you are doing, and nothing but the clatter of its machinery remains? Alas for you if such times are in the preponderance, if they are not lost in the general presence of the idea of your labor, making it an inspiration and making you heroic in your dedication to it.

Along with this primary quality of all heroism there go two others, closely related to it. They are Magnanimity and Bravery. The true hero is generous and brave. Whence comes his generosity? Is it not of the very essence of his ideality. Let me be a scholar, for instance. The first question will be whether I have got hold of the idea of scholarship and have given myself to it. Am I studying for my own sake, to make myself famous or accomplished; or am I studying for scholarship's sake, to make my branch of study more complete, to glorify and multiply the cause of knowledge in the world? If the first, I have no real ground of sympathy with other scholars. I do not take a cordial interest in their success. I am not tempted to help them. I am tempted again and again to hinder them. I am open to all kinds of jealousy and spite and little-mindedness. If the latter, I am anxious for every other worker's success, as well as for my own. I am as glad of another man's discovery as if I had made it. I cannot be jealous of the light which some new hand flings on that subject

which it is the object of my life to glorify. I will help every brother student as eagerly as I will help myself. Here is magnanimity. You see how closely it is bound up with ideality. The magnanimous public man is he who so lives for the ideas of his country that he is not jealous but glad when he sees other men doing more for the development of these ideas than he can do. The magnanimous churchman is he who cares so much for the church that he will help any other man's work for her as devotedly as if it were his own. The magnanimous man is he who has so conceived the idea of manhood, to whom humanity is so sublime a thing, that he will help another man to complete himself, to be as good and as great as he can be, with as much earnestness as he will expend in his own culture. Here is generosity. You see that it is not mere good-nature. It is most intelligent and has its reasons. And this is the second element of heroism.

And the third element is Bravery. We can see how heroic bravery too belongs with the quality which discovers and fastens upon ideas. There are two kinds of bravery; one which comes from the recollection of self, the other which comes from the forgetfulness of self. An Indian is brave when out of sheer pride he lets men drive their burning fagots into his flesh and utters no cry. A fireman is brave when for his duty he rushes into a burning house and, all scorched and bleeding, brings out the ransomed child. The first is brave by self-recollection. The second is brave by self-forgetfulness. The first has gathered up all his self-possession and said, "Now I will not flinch or fear because it is unworthy of me." The second has cast all recollection

of himself aside and said, "That child will die if I stay here." We need not ask which of these two braveries is heroic. There is a courage that comes of fear. A man learns that on the whole it is safer in the world not to dodge and shirk, and so he goes on and meets life as it comes. There is nothing heroic about that. A man wants to run away, but because his fear of disgrace is greater than his fear of bullets he stays in the ranks and shuts his eyes and marches on. There is nothing heroic about that. A man is afraid as he sits alone and thinks about a task, but when he gets among his fellow-men, a mere contagious feeling takes possession of him and he is ready to fight and die because other men are fighting or dying, like a dog in a pack of dogs. That is "the courage corporate that drags the coward to heroic death." There is nothing heroic about that. Only when a man seizes the idea and meaning of some cause, and in the love and inspiration of that is able to forget himself and go to danger fearlessly because of his great desire and enthusiasm, only then is bravery heroic.

Ideality, magnanimity, and bravery then; these are what make the heroes. These are what glorify certain lives that stand through history as the lights and beacons of mankind. The materialist, the sceptic, the coward, he cannot be a hero. We talk sometimes about the unheroic character of modern life. We say that there can be no heroes nowadays. We point to our luxurious living for the reason. But oh, my friends, it is not in your silks and satins, not in your costly houses and your sumptuous tables, that your unheroic lives consist. It is in the absence of great inspiring ideas, of generous enthusiasms, and of the courage of self-forgetfulness. It

may be that you must throw away your comfortable living to get these things; but your lack of heroism is not in your comfortable living, but in the absence of these things. Do not blame a mere accident for that which lies so much deeper. There are moments when you bear your sorrows, when you watch by your dying, when you bury your dead, when you are anxiously teaching your children, when you resist a great temptation, when your faith or your country is in danger; there are such moments with you all when you seize the idea of human living and are made generous and brave because of it. Then, for all your modern dress, for all your modern parlor where you stand, you are heroic like David, like Paul, like any of God's knights in any of the ages which are most remote and picturesque. Then you catch some glimpse of a region into which you might enter, and where, with no blast of trumpets or waving of banners, you might be heroic all the time.

And now we may turn to that which has been our purpose in all we have been saying. What we have had in our mind is the great work of foreign missions, and we have been led to speak of heroism in its three fold quality of ideality and magnanimity and bravery. Now no cause ever really takes possession of the world unless it puts on the heroic aspect, unless it shows itself capable of inspiring heroism. Christianity is subject to this law like every other cause. It, too, must show itself heroic or it fails to seize and hold mankind; and it is in the desire for universal extension, the desire to make its Master known to all men, the desire for foreign missions, that Christianity asserts her heroism.

It is true indeed that Christianity is itself heroic life. All that there is in human living becomes magnified and glorified to its best when it is put under the leadership of Christ. The deepest idea of life is brought out and proclaimed; the true generosity of life is uttered; its selfishness is broken up; and love, which is the power of the Christian life, casts out fear and makes the servant of the Savior brave. The Christian is the heroic man. Ah! as I say that, does there float across your mind the memory of many and many a time in history, or in the life that you have watched, or in your own life which you have lived, my Christian friends, when the Christian has not been the hero; when, even in the name of Christ, the Christianity which called Him its Master has seemed to forsake ideas and to give itself over to machineries, seemed to make life dwindle into a little system of economies for securing to privileged souls freedom from pain and a share in luxuries here and hereafter, seemed to make men cowardly instead of brave? I know it! I know it! Such things have been; such things have been and they still are, in the name of Christ. But such things are not Christianity. Look at Christ! The idealist, the generous, the brave! Anything that is mechanical, that is selfish, that is cowardly, coming into His religion, comes as an intruder and an enemy. Christianity in its essence is, Christianity in its long and general influence always has been, heroic; the power of ideality and magnanimity and bravery among men.

But if Christianity is heroic life, the missionary work is heroic Christianity. By this time I am sure that I have made it clear that if that is true at all it is true

not from any mere circumstances of personal privation which attach to the missionary life, but because the missionary life has most closely seized and most tenaciously holds and lives by the essential central life-idea of Christianity. What is that idea? Out of all the complicated mass of Christian thought and faith, is there any one conception which we can select and say, "That is the idea of Christianity"? Certainly there is. What is it? That man is the child of God. That, beyond all doubt, is the idea of Christianity. Everything issues from, everything returns to, that. Man's first happiness, man's fallen life, man's endless struggle, man's quenchless hope, — they are all bound up and find their explanation in the truth that man was, and has never ceased to be, and is, the child of God. Therein lies the secret of the incarnation, all the appeal of the Savior's life, all the power of the Savior's death. It is the Son of God bringing back the children to their Father. Now we believe that, we love it, we live by it, all of us in all our Christian life. But when a man gathers up his life and goes out simply to spend it all in telling the children of God who never heard it from any other lips than his that their Father is their Father; when all that he has known of Christ is simply turned into so much force by which the tidings of their sonship is to be driven home to hearts that do not easily receive so vast a truth; to that man certainly the idea has become a master and a king, as it has not to us. Belief is power. By the quantity of power I may know the quantity of belief. He is the true idealist, not who possesses ideas, but whom ideas possess; not the man whose life wears its ideas as ornamental jewels, but the man whose ideas

shape his life like plastic clay. And so the true Christian idealist is he whose conception of man as the redeemed child of God has taken all his life and moulded it in new shapes, planted it in new places, so filled and inspired it that, like the Spirit of God in Elijah, it has taken it up and carried it where it never would have chosen to go of its own lower will.

Here lies, I think, the real truth about the relation which the missionary life has to the surrenders and privations and hardships which it has to undergo. The missionary does give up his home and all the circumstances of cultivated comfortable life, and goes out across the seas, among the savages to tell them of the great Christian truth, to carry them the gospel. I am sure that often a great deal too much has been made of the missionary's surrenders, as if they were something almost inconceivable, as if they in themselves constituted some vague sort of claim upon the respect and even the support of other men. But we are constantly reminded that that is not so. The missionaries themselves, from St. Paul down, have never claimed mere pity for their sacrifices. It is other people, it is the speakers in missionary meetings, who have claimed it for them. The sacrifices of the missionary every year are growing less and less. As civilization and quick communication press the globe ever smaller, and make life on the banks of the Ganges much the same that it is on the banks of the Charles, the sacrifices of the missionary life grow more and more slight. And always there is the fact, which people are always ready to point out, that other men do every day for gain or pleasure just what the missionary does for the gospel, and nobody wonders.

The merchant leaves his home and goes and lives in China to make money. The young man dares the sea and explores the depths of Africa or the jungles of the islands for scientific discovery or for pure adventure. What is the missionary more than these? What do you say to me about his sacrifices? Only this, I think, that the fact that he is ready to do the same things — not greater, if you please, but the same things — for the Christian idea, which other men will do for money or for discovery or for adventure, is a great proof of the power of that idea. It takes at once what some people call a vague sentiment, and co-ordinates it as a working force with the mightiest powers the world knows; for there are none stronger than these, money, discovery, and adventure. And since men are to be judged not merely by the way in which they submit themselves to forces but by the quality of the forces to which they submit, not merely by their obediences but by their masters, not merely by their enthusiasms but by the subjects about which they are enthusiastic; it certainly is a different sort of claim to our respect when a man dares any kind of sacrifice for Christ and His gospel of man's divine sonship, from that which comes when a man dares just the same sacrifices for himself, or for his family which is but his extended self. Here is the true value to give to the often told and ever touching story of the missionary's sufferings. I resent it as an insult to him if I am asked to pity him because, going to preach the gospel of the Savior, he very often has to sleep out-doors and walk till he is footsore, and stand where men jeer at him and taunt him. But I rejoice in that story of suffering because I can see through it

the clear strong power of his faith in that gospel for which he undertook it all. The suffering is valueless save for the motive which shines through it. The world is right when, seeing Paul and a whole shipload of other people wrecked upon the coast of Malta, it has wholly forgotten or never cared who the other people were, but has seized the shipwrecked Paul and set him among the heroes. It was not the shipwreck but the idea that shone through the shipwreck, that made his heroism. He was a martyr, a witness. The roar of the breakers and the crash of the ship were but the emphasis. The essential force and meaning was in the great apostle's faith. The poor wretches who suffered with him were on their own selfish errands, and the shipwreck could give no real dignity or beauty to what was not in itself dignified or beautiful.

It seems as if I need not take the time to show that with the supreme ideal character of the missionary's life there must go a supreme magnanimity and bravery.

Look at the point of magnanimity. No man can be magnanimous who does not live by ideas. But the higher and the more enthusiastic the ideas, the more complete will be the magnanimity they bring. Now the missionary idea that man is God's child gives birth to two enthusiasms; one for the Father, one for the child; one for God, one for man. The two blend together without any interference, and both together drown the missionary's self-remembrance, with all its littleness and jealousy. Who can tell, as the missionary stands there preaching the salvation to his dusky congregation, which fire burns the warmest in his heart?

Is it the love for God or for his brethren? Is it the Master who died for him, or these men for whom also He died, from whom his strongest inspiration comes? No one can tell. He cannot tell himself. The Lord Himself in His own parable foretold the noble, sweet, inextricable confusion. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these ye have done it unto Me." But surely in the blended power of the two enthusiasms there is the strongest power of magnanimity. All that the mystic feels of personal love of God, all that the philanthropist knows of love for man, these two, each purifying and deepening and heightening the other, unite in the soul of him who goes to tell the men whom he loves as his brethren, about God whom he loves as his Father.

Of the courage of the missionary life I have already spoken. Its singularity and supremacy are not in the way in which the missionary dares physical danger; other men do that. It is not in his cheerful bearing of men's dislike and scorn. That we all know is too easy for us to wonder at it when a man is really possessed by a great idea. The real courage of the missionary is in the mixture of mental and moral daring with which he faces his great idea itself. A man dares to believe, in spite of all discouragement, in spite of all the brutishness and hateful life of men, in spite of retarded civilization and continual outbreaks of the power of evil, that man is still the child of God, and that the way is wide open for every man to come to his Father, and that the Christ who has redeemed us to the Father must ultimately claim the whole world for His own. That is the bravest thing a reasonable man can do, to thoroughly

believe that and to take one's whole life and consecrate it to that truth. A man may no doubt do it heedlessly and thoughtlessly, just as a man may walk up to a cannon's mouth singing light songs, but when a man does it with patient, calm, earnest thoughtfulness, it is the bravest thing a man can do. To face a great idea and, owning its mastery, to put our hands into its hands, saying, "Lead where you will and I will go with you;" that is always a more courageous thing than it is to fight with giants or to bear pain.

I have pleaded with you this morning for the heroism of the missionary life. Not because of the pains it suffers but because of the essential character it bears it is heroic. Pain is the aureole but not the sainthood. So they have marched of old, the missionaries of all the ages of the religion of the Incarnation and the Cross, idealists, believers, magnanimous and brave, the heroes of our faith. They were all this because they were missionaries. They could not have been missionaries and not have been all this. You cannot picture mere machines or disbelievers or selfish men or cowards doing what they have done. They have lived in the midst of infinite thoughts and yet not grown vague. They have worked with the tools of human life, but not grown petty. In one word, they have been heroes because of their faith, because their souls supremely believed in and their lives were supremely given to Christ.

If, as I believe with all my heart, the world's fullest faith in Christ is yet to come; if, as I think, we are just coming now to a simpler and deeper Christianity than the world has ever known, who shall not dare to

hope that the missionary life, the heroism of Christianity, the heroism of the heroism of human life is not dead, but is just upon the point of opening its true glory and living with a power that it has never shown before?

Let us have some such faith to-day. It is a little heroic even to believe in foreign missions. If we may not be among the heroes, let us, like the church of old, hear the Holy Ghost and go with Paul and Barnabas down to their ship and lay our hands on them and send them away with all our sympathy and blessing. So, perhaps, we can catch something of their heroism. So, in our quiet and home-keeping Christian lives, the idea of Christianity may become more clear, Christ our Lord more dear, and we ourselves be made more faithful, more generous, and more brave.

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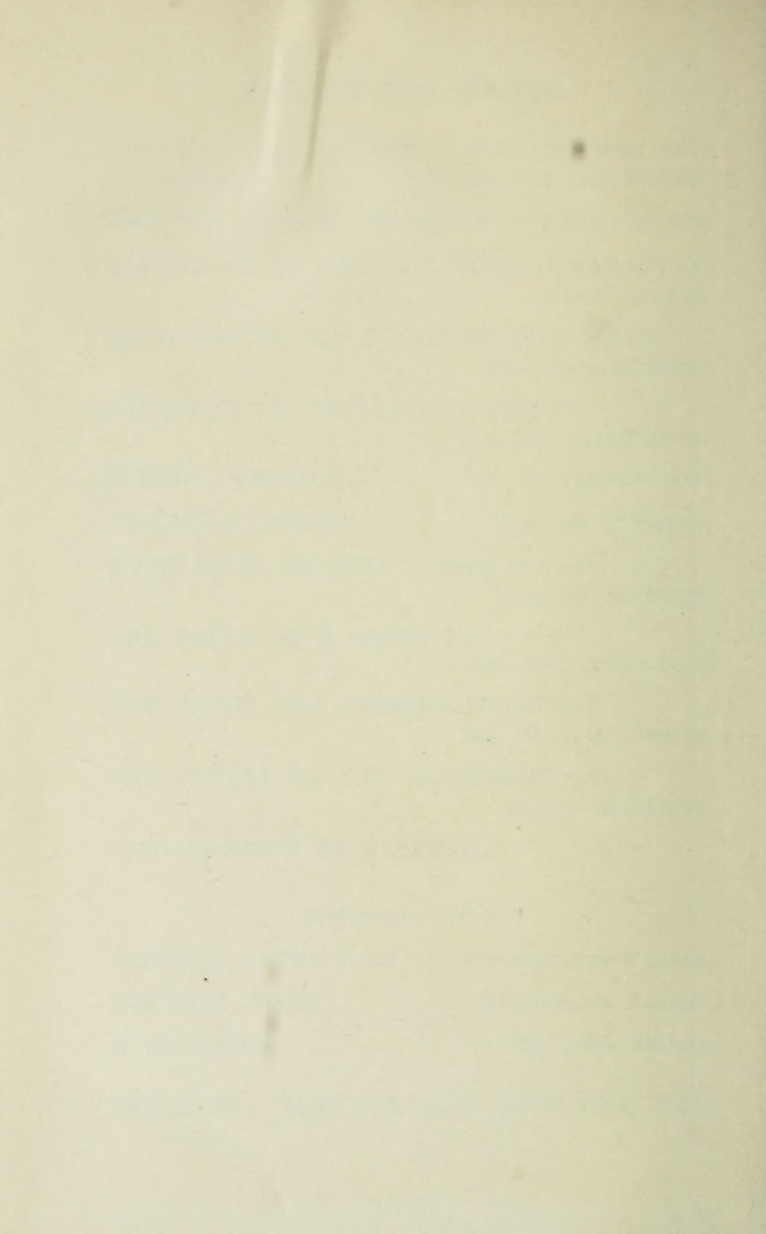
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